# POETRY
OF THE
VICTORIAN
PERIOD

by

WOODS

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# POETRY
## OF THE
# VICTORIAN PERIOD

*SELECTED AND EDITED WITH CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES, BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES, AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES*

BY

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SCOTT, FORESMAN AND COMPANY
CHICAGO ATLANTA DALLAS NEW YORK

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Printed in the United States of America

# PREFACE

The poetry of the Victorian Period bulks large; moreover, it is notably rich and diversified in content and in interest. This book aims to give adequate representation to the poets and to the poetry of this great period. Effort has been made to choose material that accurately reflects the temper and the spirit of the age and that reveals at the same time the individuality and the special merit of each author. This is an ample collection of poetry; it must needs be if it is to represent fairly the hundreds of volumes of verse written or published between 1830 and 1910. Whether poems are included for their intrinsic worth or, as occasionally, because of their historical importance, there is enough here for almost any study that one cares to make of the poetry of the period.

More space than usual has been given to the dozen or fifteen leading poets of the period—from Tennyson and Browning at one end to Kipling and Hardy at the other. The best and most enduring work of the most enduring poets is here. Too often, however, the few obviously great poets in a period crowd out significant minor poets that deserve a better fate. Furthermore, not infrequently a knowledge of the work of the poets of second rank is essential to any real understanding of the age in which they lived and wrote. Considerable space has therefore been allotted to the minor poets of the period, who in no small or uncertain way contributed to the great stream of literary tradition of which they are a part. A few poets are represented by but one or two poems, the result of an inspiration that struck fire only once or twice, but that furnished for the moment real illumination. Many of these poems were famous in their own day and deserve to be recaptured for the delight of modern readers. Victorian verse cannot be adequately presented or studied without them.

The book presents wherever possible complete poems or at least complete units. The following appear in their entirety—*In Memoriam*, *Maud*, *Pippa Passes*, *In a Balcony*, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, *Tristram and Iseult*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, *The City of Dreadful Night*, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, and *The Shropshire Lad*. There are included also two Idylls of the *Idylls of the King*, two Books of *The Ring and the Book*, over half of the sonnets of *The House of Life*, two sections of *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*, and generous selections from *Atalanta in Calydon* and *In Hospital*.

Much space is given to verse inspired by exciting events of the nineteenth century—in politics, in industry, in social organization—events that stirred human passions throughout the world and roused men to noble and heroic endeavor. The entire Victorian era was marked by significant political and social change and advancement. The poetry of the period—that of the major poets, and perhaps even more that of the minor poets—is closely related to the political and social structure of the age. Ample recognition is given also to the religious and devotional poetry of the period, so sincere and so poignant in its record of the contemporary controversies aroused by new and disquieting discoveries and theories in science. Another significant interest given copious space is art, which was a passion of a number of the poets represented. No period of the world's history approaches the nineteenth century in its understanding of great artistic achievements and in its appreciation of perennial qualities of various forms of creative art. Here are included numerous poems treating art and poetry of earlier days and exemplifying contemporary artistic theories and enthusiasms. Nor has there been overlooked that cherished body of humorous poetry which has always delighted a multitude of readers. No collection of Victorian poetry would be complete without a fair representation of this sparkling lighter verse. The more solid and serious aspects of the period needed the relief of the comic, and nonsense and laughter may justly claim a place in any such volume as this.

But Victorian verse need not base its claim for recognition on Victorian history and thought; the reputations established between 1830 and 1900 are undergoing re-evaluation, of course, but that re-evaluation does not seriously weaken the belief that the Victorian age is one of the three or four peaks of significant creative force in the long record of English poetry. And the controlling factor in the selection of material for this book has been the desire to show the Victorian poets giving play to "their free onward impulse brushing through."

Of especial interest will be found the selections from the poets of the later years of the period—including the writers listed in the Table of Contents from Austin Dobson to Thomas Hardy. The importance of many of these names is already unquestioned, and their place in English literature is secure. Some of them continued the tradition of their Victorian predecessors; others openly challenged the past and carried new torches lighted by the twin spirits of change and revolt. Down to the 90's Victorian poetry is in the main, though with significant new shadings, a continuation of the Romantic tradition founded in the first third of the century. Manner and substance alike bear the noble stigmata of the generation of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats. From 1890 on, there were daring iconoclasts who discarded conventional Victorian themes and theories, Victorian seriousness and idealism, Victorian richness of manner, and dedicated themselves eagerly and confidently to the task of writing poetry that out-Browninged Browning in its direct grapple with life, or in a striking complementary effort sought escape from life in a dream, a picture, a mood, an emotion, an impression. Both the English and the Irish members of this intrepid and adventurous group are well represented in this text.

It will thus be seen that the entire collection is more comprehensive, more inclusive, more accurately representative, than any of its predecessors. It will therefore readily allow for individual choices of teachers using the volume in college or university courses.

The construction of this book is not on the easy and conventional plan of most anthologies. Serious effort has been made to prepare a really usable book, one that the student can understand without running hither and yon to books of reference. Real investigation has its place, of course, sometimes even in college classes. But when a student or a general reader sits down to read poetry, the less he has to stop to find out the meaning of unfamiliar words or obscure allusions, the better. This book aims to furnish an apparatus which shall make it possible readily to understand and to enjoy the poems presented. Explanatory footnotes give the information and explanations needed to allow straight-away reading. The Critical Notes in the Appendix throw into relief certain important problems concerning the artistry of the poets and the period. Brief biographical sketches, also in the Appendix, endeavor to present vividly and interestingly the minimum number of facts necessary in the case of each poet. Although reasonably full, the bibliographies prepared are not intended to be complete; they include the more important editions of each writer, the chief biographies, and the more illuminating criticisms of his work.

The order of the poets in the volume is roughly chronological, the chief dates of writing and publication being determining factors. Poems under each author are arranged in the order of their writing (if known) or of their first publication. Following each poem are printed dates of writing (in italics) and dates of publication (in Roman type).

In the preparation of this volume I have been generously aided by several of my colleagues—Professor Will Hutchins, Mrs. Lois Miles Zucker, and Dr. Harold Golder. Dr. Golder rendered especially valuable service in helping prepare the biographies, the bibliographies, and some of the notes. The Index was prepared by my daughter Margaret. My chief obligation, however, is due Professor Lindsay Todd Damon, of Brown University, whose scholarship and judgment contributed to the improvement of the work at every turn. To him and to my colleagues who aided me so materially, I express appreciation and gratitude. I express thanks also to the authors who have graciously allowed me to include their poems in the volume, and to the various publishers who have granted permission to use poems still in copyright.

George B. Woods

WASHINGTON, D. C.,
OCTOBER 15, 1930

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# POETRY OF THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

## THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY
(1800-1859)

### THE BATTLE OF NASEBY

BY OBADIAH BIND-THEIR-KINGS-IN-CHAINS-AND-THEIR-NOBLES-WITH-LINKS-OF-IRON, SERGEANT IN IRETON'S REGIMENT

Oh, wherefore come ye forth in triumph from the North,
With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all red?
And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout?
And whence be the grapes of the wine-press that ye tread?

Oh! evil was the root, and bitter was the fruit,
And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod;
For we trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong,
Who sate in the high places and slew the saints of God.

It was about the noon of a glorious day of June,
That we saw their banners dance and their cuirasses shine,
And the Man of Blood was there, with his long essencéd hair,
And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
The General rode along us to form us for the fight;
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swelled into a shout
Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
The cry of battle rises along their charging line:
For God! for the Cause! for the Church! for the Laws!
For Charles, King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine!

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his drums,
His bravoes of Alsatia and pages of Whitehall;
They are bursting on our flanks! Grasp your pikes! Close your ranks!
For Rupert never comes, but to conquer, or to fall.

They are here—they rush on—we are broken—we are gone—
Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth thy might! O Lord, defend the right!
Stand back to back, in God's name! and fight it to the last!

Stout Skippon hath a wound—the center hath given ground.
Hark! hark! what means the trampling of horsemen on our rear?
Whose banner do I see, boys? 'Tis he! thank God! 'tis he, boys!
Bear up another minute! Brave Oliver is here!

---

*The Battle of Naseby.* The Battle of Naseby, fought on June 14, 1645, was the first important victory of the Parliamentary, or Puritan, forces over the forces of the English king, Charles I. Oliver Cromwell was one of the Parliamentary generals. Over 5000 royalists surrendered; 2000 fled from the field with Charles. Naseby is 70 miles northwest of London.

*Subtitle.* The story is supposed to be told by a Puritan soldier in the regiment of General Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law. The fantastic name indicates the zealous nature of the militant Puritans.

1. **the North.** The royalists were in control in the North, the Puritans in the South. The first stanza is the inquiry of a Puritan in the southwest of England, where Fairfax led his army after Naseby. The rest of the poem is the Sergeant's reply. 4. **wine-press . . . tread.** From *Isaiah*, 63:2-3.—"Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winevat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." 11. **Man of Blood,** Charles I. 12. **Astley . . . Rupert.** These men were Royalist officers. Rupert was Charles's nephew. He was the son of Frederick, the Elector Palatine of the Rhine.

14. **The General,** Sir Thomas Fairfax (1612-71), commander-in-chief of the Parliamentary forces. 16. **godless horsemen.** The Puritans regarded the Royalists as utterly depraved. The war was religious as well as political. 22. **Alsatia,** an outlying district of London, now known as Whitefriars. It was the resort of lawbreakers because of certain privileges of sanctuary it possessed by virtue of a convent of the Carmelites, or White Friars, that formerly stood there. The privilege was annulled in 1697. **Whitehall,** the royal palace in London. 29. **Skippon,** a general of the Parliamentary army.

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row;
Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dikes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the Accurst,
And at a shock have scattered the forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast, the gallants ride, in some safe nook to hide
Their coward heads, predestined to rot on Temple Bar;
And he—he turns! he flies! shame on those cruel eyes
That bore to look on torture, and dare not look on war!

Ho, comrades! scour the plain; and ere ye strip the slain,
First give another stab to make your search secure;
Then shake from sleeves and pockets their broad-pieces and lockets,
The tokens of the wanton, the plunder of the poor.

Fools! your doublets shone with gold, and your hearts were gay and bold,
When you kissed your lily hands to your lemans today;
And tomorrow shall the fox from her chambers in the rocks
Lead forth her tawny cubs to howl about the prey.

Where be your tongues that late mocked at heaven and hell and fate?
And the fingers that once were so busy with your blades?
Your perfumed satin clothes, your catches, and your oaths?
Your stage-plays and your sonnets, your diamonds and your spades?

Down, down, forever down with the miter and the crown,
With the Belial of the court, and the Mammon of the Pope!
There is woe in Oxford halls, there is wail in Durham's stalls;
The Jesuit smites his bosom, the bishop rends his cope.

And she of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's sword;
And the kings of earth in fear shall shudder when they hear
What the hand of God hath wrought for the Houses and the Word!

(*1824*; 1824)

## THE LAST BUCCANEER

The winds were yelling, the waves were swelling,
The sky was black and drear,
When the crew with eyes of flame brought the ship without a name
Alongside the last Buccaneer.

"Whence flies your sloop full sail before so fierce a gale,
When all others drive bare on the seas?
Say, come ye from the shore of the holy Salvador,
Or the gulf of the rich Caribbees?"

"From a shore no search hath found, from a gulf no line can sound,
Without rudder or needle we steer;
Above, below, our bark, dies the sea fowl and the shark,
As we fly by the last Buccaneer.

"Tonight there shall be heard on the rocks of Cape de Verde
A loud crash, and a louder roar;
And tomorrow shall the deep, with a heavy moaning, sweep
The corpses and wreck to the shore."

---

38. **Temple Bar**, one of the entrances to London. The heads of criminals and of persons convicted of treason were displayed over the gateway at this place. 40. **That . . . war.** There is no evidence to support this statement regarding Charles I. 43. **broad-pieces**, gold coins; twenty-shilling pieces. 51. **catches**, light songs. 52. **diamonds . . . spades.** The Puritans looked with abhorrence upon card playing. 53. **miter**, the official headdress of a bishop; hence, the symbol of a bishop's office. 54. **Belial**, the spirit of evil or lawlessness. He is one of the fallen angels in *Paradise Lost*. **Mammon**, the personification of earthly ambition, the god of wealth.

55. **Oxford halls.** Oxford was the rallying place of the King's party. **Durham's stalls**, seats in the choir of Durham Cathedral, used by officiating clergy. The Bishop of Durham was an ardent supporter of the King. 57. **she of the seven hills**, the Roman Catholic Church. Rome was built on seven hills. 60. **Houses**, the two houses of Parliament. **the Word**, the Bible.

*The Last Buccaneer.* A buccaneer was a pirate or a pirate ship. The name was applied especially to adventurers who in the 17th and 18th centuries plundered the Spanish possessions in the West Indies and South America and preyed upon Spanish ships. Cf. Kingsley's *The Last Buccaneer*, page 398.

3. **ship without a name**, probably a spectral ship of death, like "The Flying Dutchman," a phantom ship that meant disaster to the sailors who saw it. 7. **Salvador**, San (Saint) Salvador, one of the Bahama Islands. 8. **rich Caribbees.** The Spanish possessions in the Caribbean Sea were noted for their wealth. 13. **Cape de Verde**, a cape on the west coast of Africa; also a group of islands off the cape.

The stately ship of Clyde securely now may ride
In the breath of the citron shades;
And Severn's towering mast securely now flies fast,
Through the sea of the balmy Trades.

From St. Jago's wealthy port, from Havannah's royal fort,
The seaman goes forth without fear;
For since that stormy night not a mortal hath had sight
Of the flag of the last Buccaneer. *(1839)*

## HORATIUS

### A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY 360

1

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.
By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

2

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

3

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place;
From many a fruitful plain;
From many a lonely hamlet,
Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
Of purple Apennine;

4

From lordly Volaterræ,
Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
For godlike kings of old;
From seagirt Populonia,
Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
Fringing the southern sky;

5

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
Queen of the western waves,
Where ride Massilia's triremes
Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
Through corn and vines and flowers;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers.

6

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in dark Auser's rill;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
The great Volsinian mere.

7

But now no stroke of woodman
Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the waterfowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

8

The harvests of Arretium,
This year, old men shall reap,
This year, young boys in Umbro
Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna,
This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

---

17. **Clyde.** The river Clyde, in Scotland, and the Severn (line 19), in England, are noted for their shipping. 18. **In . . . shades,** in tropical winds. 20. **Trades,** the trade winds, of tropical regions. 21. **St. Jago,** an important seaport on the west coast of Cuba, now known as Santiago de Cuba.

*Horatius.* See Critical Notes.

1. **Lars Porsena,** ruler of the Etruscans. *Lars* is a title meaning *chieftain.* **Clusium.** Clusium was one of the most important of the twelve cities of the Etruscan Confederation. 2. **Nine Gods.** According to tradition there were nine great Etruscan gods.

27-28. **Where . . . giants,** a reference to the mountainous nature of Etruria. The mountains were supposed to have been piled up by the ancient race of giants. 36. **Massilia,** ancient Marseilles, noted as a great commercial center. **trireme,** a warship with three banks of oars. 37. **slaves,** from Gaul, bought and sold by Greek merchants. 39. **corn,** wheat. 55. **milk-white steer,** a famous breed of oxen used as victims for sacrifice. 63. **must,** grape juice.

9

There be thirty chosen prophets,
The wisest of the land,
Who alway by Lars Porsena
Both morn and evening stand;
Evening and morn the Thirty
Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

10

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena;
Go forth, beloved of Heaven;
Go, and return in glory
To Clusium's royal dome;
And hang round Nurscia's altars
The golden shields of Rome."

11

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten;
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

12

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
To join the muster came
The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.

13

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright;
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
The throng stopped up the ways;
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

14

For aged folks on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sunburnt husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,

15

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine,
And endless trains of wagons
That creaked beneath the weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

16

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.
The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

17

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house nor fence nor dovecote
In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
And the stout guards are slain.

18

I wis, in all the Senate,
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached, and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

19

They held a council standing
Before the River-Gate;

---

71. **verses**, prophecies preserved in verse. 72. **Traced from the right**, written from right to left. 80. **Nurscia**, Nortia, or Nurtia, an Etruscan goddess of fortune, worshiped in the temple at Volsinium, one of the twelve chief cities of Etruria. 81. **golden shields**. In the early days of Rome a golden shield of Mars, the god of war, was said to have fallen from heaven. The prosperity of the city was thought to depend upon the preservation of this shield, and eleven others were made exactly like it to safeguard it. 83. **tale**, count, allotment. 100. **champaign**, the Campagna di Roma, the extensive undulating plain surrounding Rome.

122. **rock Tarpeian**, a high cliff on the Capitoline Hill. 126. **Fathers of the City**, senators. 134. **Verbenna**. Verbenna and Astur (line 136) are inventions of Macaulay. 136. **Janiculum**, a high hill across the Tiber, commanding the city.

Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.
Out spake the Consul roundly:
"The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
Naught else can save the town."

20

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear;
"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul:
Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

21

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling, and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

22

And plainly, and more plainly
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

23

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.
There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen;
And Astur of the fourfold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield;
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

24

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sat in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

25

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spat toward him and hissed,
No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

26

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town?"

27

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods,

28

"And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame?

29

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;

---

180-181. **terror . . . Gaul.** Porsena of Clusium was a terror to the men of Umbria (a province in central Italy, east of Etruria) and to the men of Gaul (a province in northern Italy). 184. **port and vest,** bearing and dress. 185. **Lucumo,** the title of an Etruscan prince.

194. **war,** warlike array. 200. **the deed of shame,** the rape of Lucretia. 229. **holy maidens,** Vestal Virgins, whose chief duty was to keep the sacred fires burning on the altar of Vesta, goddess of the hearth.

I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

30

Then out spake Spurius Lartius —
A Ramnian proud was he —
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius —
Of Titian blood was he —
"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

31

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

32

Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great;
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

33

Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we wax cold;
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
In the brave days of old.

34

Now while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an ax;
And Fathers mixed with Commons,
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

35

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly toward the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

36

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose;
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way;

37

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers
From that gray crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

38

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath;
Herminius struck at Seius,
And clove him to the teeth;
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust,
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

39

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three;

---

237. **strait,** narrow. 242. **Ramnian.** The three defenders of the bridge belonged to the three original patrician tribes —the Ramnes, the Tities, and the Luceres. Horatius belonged to the Luceres. 262. **Then,** etc. After Camillus captured the Etruscan city of Veii in 396 B.C., he distributed large quantities of booty among the Roman citizens; he was later accused of making unfair distribution, and as a consequence went into exile. 267. **Tribunes,** officers appointed to protect the interests of the common people.

278. **crow,** a bar of iron with a crook or claw, used as a lever.

And Lausulus of Urgo,
The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
Along Albinia's shore.

40

Herminius smote down Aruns;
Lartius laid Ocnus low;
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
Thy thrice accurséd sail."

41

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard among the foes.
A wild and wrathful clamor
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow way.

42

But hark! the cry is Astur,
And lo, the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

43

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter
Stand savagely at bay;
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way?"

44

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.
The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh.
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

45

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild-cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face.
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet,
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a handbreadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

46

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread;
And the pale augurs, muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

47

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer?"

48

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,
Mingled of wrath and shame and dread,
Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
Were round the fatal place.

49

But all Etruria's noblest
Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
In the path the dauntless Three;
And, from the ghastly entrance
Where those bold Romans stood,

---

322. **The rover,** etc. The Etruscans were pirates as well as merchants. 360. **The she-wolf's litter,** a reference to Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome, suckled by a she-wolf.

388. **augurs,** official soothsayers, or prophets.

All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
Lies amidst bones and blood.

50

Was none who would be foremost
To lead such dire attack;
But those behind cried "Forward!"
And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
Dies fitfully away.

51

Yet one man for one moment
Stood out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
And they gave him greeting loud,
"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
Here lies the road to Rome."

52

Thrice looked he at the city;
Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread;
And, white with fear and hatred,
Scowled at the narrow way
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
The bravest Tuscans lay.

53

But meanwhile ax and lever
Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
Loud cried the Fathers all.
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
Back, ere the ruin fall!"

54

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
Herminius darted back —
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have crossed once more.

55

But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream;
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam.

56

And, like a horse unbroken
When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb, and bounded,
Rejoicing to be free,
And whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
Rushed headlong to the sea.

57

Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind;
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
"Now yield thee to our grace."

58

Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus naught spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome.

59

"O Tiber! father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
Take thou in charge this day!"
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back
Plunged headlong in the tide.

60

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank;

488. **Palatinus**, one of the seven hills of Rome. 492. **father Tiber**, the river-god.

But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

61

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain;
And fast his blood was flowing,
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armor,
And spent with changing blows;
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

62

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing-place;
But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
Bore bravely up his chin.

63

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
"Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
"And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before."

64

And now he feels the bottom;
Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

65

They gave him of the corn-land,
That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
Could plow from morn till night;
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

66

It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see;
Horatius in his harness,
Halting upon one knee;
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

67

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

68

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north-winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within;

69

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows;

70

When the goodman mends his armor,
And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom —
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

(1843)

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542. **corn-land**, grain-land belonging to the state, especially territory taken in war. 545. **plow**, plow around.

550. **Comitium**, an open space adjoining the Forum, in Rome. 561. **Volscian.** The Volscians were an ancient people in Latium, but distinct from the Romans and always hostile to them. 562. **Juno**, the protector of women and the goddess of childbirth. 572. **Algidus**, a mountain of Latium.

### EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE

To my true king I offered free from stain
Courage and faith: vain faith, and courage vain.
For him, I threw lands, honors, wealth, away,
And one dear hope, that was more prized than they.
For him I languished in a foreign clime,
Gray-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime;
Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering tree,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;
Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
Each morning started from the dream to weep;
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
The resting-place I asked, an early grave.
O thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once mine own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.
*(1845)*

## JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801-1890)

### THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Whene'er across this sinful flesh of mine
I draw the Holy Sign,
All good thoughts stir within me, and renew
Their slumbering strength divine;
Till there springs up a courage high and true
To suffer and to do.

And who shall say, but hateful spirits around,
For their brief hour unbound,
Shudder to see, and wail their overthrow?
While on far heathen ground
Some lonely Saint hails the fresh odor, though
Its source he cannot know. (*1832;* 1836)

### ENGLAND

Tyre of the West, and glorying in the name
More than in Faith's pure fame!
Oh, trust not crafty fort nor rock renowned
Earned upon hostile ground;
Wielding Trade's master-keys, at thy proud will
To lock or loose its waters, England! trust not still.

Dread thine own power! Since haughty Babel's prime,
High towers have been man's crime.
Since her hoar age, when the huge moat lay bare,
Strongholds have been man's snare.
Thy nest is in the crags; ah, refuge frail!
Mad counsel in its hour, or traitors, will prevail.

He who scanned Sodom for His righteous men
Still spares thee for thy ten;
But, should vain tongues the Bride of Heaven defy,
He will not pass thee by;
For, as earth's kings welcome their spotless guest,
So gives He them by turn, to suffer or be blest. (*1832;* 1836)

### SENSITIVENESS

Time was, I shrank from what was right
From fear of what was wrong;
I would not brave the sacred fight,
Because the foe was strong.

But now I cast that finer sense
And sorer shame aside;
Such dread of sin was indolence,
Such aim at Heaven was pride.

So, when my Savior calls, I rise
And calmly do my best;
Leaving to Him, with silent eyes
Of hope and fear, the rest.

I step, I mount where He has led;
Men count my haltings o'er —
I know them; yet, though self I dread,
I love His precept more. (*1833;* 1836)

---

*Epitaph on a Jacobite.* The Jacobites were partisans of King James II of England when he was superseded by William III in 1688. They were supporters also of James's descendants. Some of the Jacobites followed James into exile in France, and others went to Italy.

7. **Lavernia,** La Vernia (sometimes written *Alvernia*), a mountain east of Florence. **Scargill,** a parish in Yorkshire, England. 8. **Arno,** a river in Italy. **Tees,** a river in England, between York and Durham.

*England.* 1. **Tyre,** a famous city of ancient Phœnicia on the Mediterranean coast. It was noted for its worldliness and commercial prosperity. A prophecy of its destruction is recorded in *Ezekiel,* 26-28; it was destroyed by Malik al Ashraf, ruler of Egypt and Syria, in 1291.

3-4. **fort . . . ground,** a reference to the Rock of Gibraltar, a British naval base and fortification on the coast of Spain at the entrance to the Mediterranean. It was taken from the Spanish in 1704. 7. **Babel,** a reference to the confusion of tongues at the city and tower of Babel, in the land of Shinar, as related in *Genesis,* 11:1-9. Because the descendants of Noah attempted to build a tower that would reach to heaven, Jehovah, to prevent its completion, "confounded their language" so that they could not understand one another. 13-14. **Sodom . . . ten.** Sodom was a city in Palestine destroyed because of its wickedness. The Lord had promised Abraham that the city would be saved if ten righteous men could be found in it (*Genesis,* 18:17-33; 19:1-25.)

## THE PILLAR OF THE CLOUD

Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home —
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene — one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
Shouldst lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
Lead Thou me on!
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.

So long Thy power hath blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.
(*1833;* 1836)

## From THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS

### *Soul*

Take me away, and in the lowest deep
There let me be,
And there in hope the lone night-watches keep,
Told out for me.
There, motionless and happy in my pain,
Lone, not forlorn, —
There will I sing my sad perpetual strain,
Until the morn.

There will I sing, and soothe my stricken breast,
Which ne'er can cease
To throb and pine, and languish, till possest
Of its Sole Peace.
There will I sing my absent Lord and Love —
Take me away,
That sooner I may rise, and go above,
And see Him in the truth of everlasting day.

### *Angel*

Now let the golden prison ope its gates,
Making sweet music, as each fold revolves
Upon its ready hinge. And ye great powers,
Angels of Purgatory, receive from me
My charge, a precious soul, until the day,
When, from all bond and forfeiture released,
I shall reclaim it for the courts of light.

. . . . .

Softly and gently, dearly-ransomed soul,
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

And carefully I dip thee in the lake,
And thou, without a sob or a resistance,
Dost through the flood thy rapid passage take,
Sinking deep, deeper into the dim distance.

Angels, to whom the willing task is given,
Shall tend, and nurse, and lull thee, as thou liest;
And Masses on the earth, and prayers in heaven,
Shall aid thee at the Throne of the Most Highest.

Farewell, but not forever! brother dear,
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow;
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.
(*1865;* 1865)

## FRANCIS SYLVESTER MAHONY
## ("Father Prout")
## (1805-1866)

### THE SHANDON BELLS

With deep affection
And recollection
I often think of
Those Shandon bells,
Whose sounds so wild would,
In the days of childhood,
Fling round my cradle
Their magic spells.
On this I ponder
Where'er I wander,
And thus grow fonder,
Sweet Cork, of thee,
With thy bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the River Lee.

---

*The Pillar of the Cloud.* This poem was written on shipboard when Newman was returning from Italy. The title refers to the incident of Moses leading the children of Israel out of Egypt—"And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light" (*Exodus*, 13:21).

*The Dream of Gerontius.* This is a deeply religious poem that records the thoughts and emotions of Gerontius, an old man, as he lies dying. His soul leaving the body is borne by the Guardian Angel to Purgatory.

*The Shandon Bells.* The Shandon bells are in the Church of St. Anne Shandon, in the city of Cork, Ireland, near the River Lee. The bells are justly famous.

I've heard bells chiming
Full many a clime in,
Tolling sublime in
  Cathedral shrine,
While at a glibe rate
Brass tongues would vibrate —
But all their music
  Spoke naught like thine;
For memory, dwelling
On each proud swelling
Of the belfry, knelling
  Its bold notes free,
Made the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
  Of the River Lee.

I've heard bells tolling
Old Adrian's Mole in,
Their thunder rolling
  From the Vatican,
And cymbals glorious
Swinging uproarious
In the gorgeous turrets
  Of Notre Dame;
But thy sounds were sweeter
Than the dome of Peter
Flings o'er the Tiber,
  Pealing solemnly:
Oh! the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
  Of the River Lee.

There's a bell in Moscow;
While on tower and kiosk, oh!
In Saint Sophia
  The Turkman gets,
And loud in air
Calls men to prayer,
From the tapering summit
  Of tall minarets.
Such empty phantom
I freely grant them;
But there's an anthem
  More dear to me:
'Tis the bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
  Of the River Lee. (1834)

## JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN
(1808-1849)

### DARK ROSALEEN

O my Dark Rosaleen,
  Do not sigh, do not weep!
The priests are on the ocean green,
  They march along the deep.
There's wine from the royal Pope
  Upon the ocean green,
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
  My Dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
Shall give you health, and help, and hope,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

Over hills and through dales
  Have I roamed for your sake;
All yesterday I sailed with sails
  On river and on lake.
The Erne, at its highest flood,
  I dashed across unseen,
For there was lightning in my blood,
  My Dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
Oh! there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lightened through my blood,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

All day long, in unrest,
  To and fro do I move,
The very soul within my breast
  Is wasted for you, Love!
The heart in my bosom faints
  To think of you, my Queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
  My Dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

Woe and pain, pain and woe,
  Are my lot, night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
  Like to a mournful moon.
But yet will I rear your throne
  Again in golden sheen;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
  My Dark Rosaleen!
  My own Rosaleen!
'Tis you shall have the golden throne,
'Tis you shall reign, and reign alone,
  My Dark Rosaleen!

---

21. **glibe**, ready, brisk; a variant of *glib*, but pronounced with long *i*. 34. **Adrian's Mole**, the tomb of the Roman Emperor Hadrian (117-138)—the Castle St. Angelo—in Rome. It is connected by a corridor with the Vatican. 40. **Notre Dame**, the famous cathedral of Paris. 42. **dome of Peter**, the great dome of St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, on the River Tiber. 49. **bell in Moscow**, the Tsar-Kolokol, or "Czar of Bells"; it is twenty feet in diameter and weighs 190 tons. 50. **kiosk**, a Turkish pavilion, often supported by pillars. 51. **Saint Sophia**, a famous mosque in Constantinople.

17. **The Erne**, a river and two celebrated lakes in northern Ireland.

Over dews, over sands,
Will I fly for your weal;
Your holy, delicate white hands
Shall girdle me with steel.
At home in your emerald bowers,
From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My fond Rosaleen!
You'll think of me through daylight's hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
My Dark Rosaleen!

I could scale the blue air,
I could plow the high hills,
Oh, I could kneel all night in prayer,
To heal your many ills!
And one beamy smile from you
Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My fond Rosaleen!
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
My Dark Rosaleen!

Oh! the Erne shall run red
With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
And flames warp hill and wood,
And gun-peal and slogan cry
Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
My Dark Rosaleen!
My own Rosaleen!
The Judgment Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
My Dark Rosaleen! (1846)

## ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
(1809-1892)

### LILIAN

1

Airy, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

2

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs
She, looking through and through me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughters dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

3

Prythee weep, May Lilian!
Gayety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian:
Through my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth:
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

4

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian. (1830)

### CLARIBEL

A MELODY

Where Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall;
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone;
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the mossed headstone;
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.

Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth. (1830)

### THE KRAKEN

Below the thunders of the upper deep,
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep

---

*Claribel.* 15. **lintwhite,** linnet. 16. **mavis,** a kind of thrush. 17. **throstle,** a kind of thrush. 19. **runnel crispeth,** brook ripples.

*The Kraken.* The Kraken was a fabulous Scandinavian sea-monster.

The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides; above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumbered and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
There hath he lain for ages, and will lie
Battening upon huge sea-worms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.
(1830)

## MARIANA

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all;
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds looked sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dews at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow;
The cock sung out an hour ere light;
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her; without hope of change,
In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarlèd bark;
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the moldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.
Old faces glimmered through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!"
(1830)

---

*Mariana.* Mariana is a lady in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* deserted by her lover. She is described as waiting for him "at the moated grange" (III, i, 277). The scenery of the poem is that of Lincolnshire.

8. **moated grange,** a large country house surrounded by a moat, or ditch. Tennyson states that no particular house is meant. 18. **trance,** traverse.

40. **marish-mosses,** mosses that grow in a marsh.

## RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flowed back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling through
The low and bloomèd foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue;
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering through lamplight dim,
And broidered sofas on each side.
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemmed platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moonlit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop through the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night
I entered, from the clearer light,
Embowered vaults of pillared palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
Heavenward, were stayed beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs. A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Through little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above through many a bowery turn
A walk with vari-colored shells
Wandered engrained. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odor in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung;
Not he, but something which possessed
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepressed,
Apart from place, withholding time,
But flattering the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumbered; the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwooed of summer wind;
A sudden splendor from behind
Flushed all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame;
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,
Entrancèd with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

---

*Recollections of the Arabian Nights.* This poem is based upon descriptive portions of stories found in *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments.* The chief character in this famous collection is Harun al Rashid, the most renowned of the Bagdad caliphs. Under him, Bagdad, located on the Tigris River, in Mesopotamia, became famous for its poets and scholars and for its many beautiful mosques. He ruled 786-809.

23. **platans,** plane trees.

47. **rivage,** river bank. 58. **engrained.** The walk was inwrought or spotted with shells. 64. **tiars,** crowns. 70. **bulbul,** the Persian nightingale. 84. **counterchanged,** variegated; checkered.

Thence through the garden I was drawn —
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-checkered lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazéd vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-baséd flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers looked to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and streamed
Upon the moonéd domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seemed
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvelous time
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone —
The sweetest lady of the time,
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silver, underpropped a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-drooped, in many a floating fold,
Engarlanded and diapered
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirred
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him — in his golden prime,
The Good Haroun Alraschid. (1830)

## SONG

### 1

A spirit haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers.
To himself he talks;
For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
In the walks;
Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the moldering flowers.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

### 2

The air is damp, and hushed, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
An hour before death;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
Over its grave i' the earth so chilly;
Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
Heavily hangs the tiger-lily. (1830)

## THE POET

The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw through life and death, through good and ill,
He saw through his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

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101. **pleasance,** pleasure. 104. **blowing,** blooming. 105. **tamarisk,** a kind of shrub bearing masses of pink flowers. 106. **Thick . . . thorn.** The thorn shrubs formed circles. 107. **orient,** oriental. 127. **moonéd,** bearing the crescent, or Turkish emblem. 135. **argent,** silvery. 140. **zone,** hair-ribbon. 148. **Engarlanded and diapered,** ornamented with inwrought flowers and symmetrical figures.

*Song.* 19. **box,** a kind of evergreen shrub.
*The Poet.* See Critical Notes.
1-4. Tennyson said that when he wrote these lines he meant that the poet is moved by a hatred for the quality of hate, etc., but later he thought it a finer interpretation to regard "hate of hate," etc., as meaning "the quintessence of hate," etc. Hallam Tennyson says, "My father denounced hate and scorn as if they were 'the sins of the Holy Ghost.'"

Before him lay; with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnished all abroad to fling
The wingéd shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Though one did fling the fire;
Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden showed,
And through the wreaths of floating dark upcurled,
Rare sunrise flowed.

And Freedom reared in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunned by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power — a sacred name,
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirled,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world. (1830)

## TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:
Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distilled from some worm-cankered homily;
But spurred at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good Sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.
(1830)

## BUONAPARTE

He thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,
Madman! — to chain with chains, and bind with bands
That island queen who sways the floods and lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,
When from her wooden walls — lit by sure hands —

---

13. **reeds**, darts or arrows blown from a pipe. 15. **From Calpe unto Caucasus**, from Gibraltar to the Caucasus Mountains, conventional western and eastern limits of Europe. 19. **field flower**, the dandelion, the seeds of which are attached to delicate shafts that the poet likens to arrows. 25. **bravely**, gloriously, admirably.

*To J. M. K.* This sonnet is addressed to John Mitchell Kemble (1807-57), who was intended for the church but who devoted his life to the study of Anglo-Saxon history and literature. He was at Cambridge with Tennyson.

*Buonaparte.* This poem refers to four signal victories of the British in the Napoleonic Wars: (1) the Battle of the Nile, in Egypt (Coptic sands, line 8), in 1798; (2) the defeat of the Danish fleet in the harbor of Copenhagen in 1801; (3) Cape Trafalgar, Spain, in 1805; and (4) Waterloo in 1815. Denmark and Norway were allies of Napoleon. Elsinore (line 9) is a seaport on the Danish island of Zealand, at the entrance to the Baltic Sea.

3. **island queen**, England. 4. **From Ind to Ind**, from East India to West India. 5. **wooden walls**, battleships.

With thunders, and with lightnings, and with smoke —
Peal after peal, the British battle broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,
Rocking with shattered spars, with sudden fires
Flamed over; at Trafalgar yet once more
We taught him; late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon schooled with briers.

(1833)

## THE LADY OF SHALOTT

### PART 1

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle embowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veiled,
Slide the heavy barges trailed
By slow horses; and unhailed
The shallop flitteth silken-sailed
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to towered Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers, " 'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

### PART 2

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-haired page in crimson clad,
Goes by to towered Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two;
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often through the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

### PART 3

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves;
The sun came dazzling through the leaves,

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14. **Gideon . . . briers.** When Gideon was pursuing the Midianites he asked the men of the city of Succoth to give bread to his army. They refused, and when Gideon returned victorious, "he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth" (*Judges*, 8:16).

*The Lady of Shalott.* See Critical Notes.

5. **Camelot,** the city of King Arthur's court, in Cornwall. 7. **blow,** bloom. 10. **Willows whiten.** The wind turns up the white underside of the leaves.

And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight forever kneeled
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glittered free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazoned baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burned like one burning flame together
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glowed;
On burnished hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flowed
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flashed into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces through the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She looked down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror cracked from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

### PART 4

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over towered Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
*The Lady of Shalott.*

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Through the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turned to towered Camelot.
For ere she reached upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
*The Lady of Shalott.*

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they crossed themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot.
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott." (1832, 1842)

84. **Galaxy**, the Milky Way.

## MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house through all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines;
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Through rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and morn,"
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and passed
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmured she,
Complaining, "Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glowed
The clear perfection of her face.
"Is this the form," she made her moan,
"That won his praises night and morn?"
And "Ah," she said, "but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seemed knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, "My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream;
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke; the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whispered, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest upon earth."
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone forevermore."
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end, to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seemed to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
"The day to night," she made her moan,
"The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And leaned upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glittered on her tears,
And deepening through the silent spheres
Heaven over heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
"The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

(1832, 1842)

## ŒNONE

There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,

---

*Mariana in the South.* See Critical Notes.

9. **Ave Mary,** in the Bible, the salutation of Gabriel and of Elizabeth to the Virgin Mary; now a prayer to her as Mother of God.

90. **Hesper,** the evening star.

*Œnone.* Œnone was a nymph of Mt. Ida, in Troas, a country in Asia Minor. She was the wife of Paris, son of King Priam of Troy (Ilion). Paris has deserted Œnone for Helen of Troy. (See Critical Notes.)

And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling through the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning; but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's columned citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seemed to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill;
The grasshopper is silent in the grass;
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops, the golden bee
Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crowned snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a river-god.
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gathered shape; for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills;
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine.
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horned, white-hoofed,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent called me from the cleft;
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropped eyes
I sat alone; white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Drooped from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Clustered about his temples like a god's;
And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm,
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I looked
And listened, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart:
'My own Œnone,
Beautiful-browed Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingraven
"For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He pressed the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added, 'This was cast upon the board,
When all the full-faced presence of the gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due;
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Heré comes today,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave

---

6. **lawns**, open places in the woods. **meadow-ledges**, open flat spaces on the hillsides. 10. **Gargarus**, the highest part of Mt. Ida. 11. **takes**, charms, bewitches; or receives. 22. **many-fountained.** Several rivers have their source on Mt. Ida. 36. **snake.** The snake was early recognized as a divinity; it symbolized the power of the underworld. 37. **river-god.** The river referred to is the Kebren, a small stream in Troas. 39-40. **walls . . . music.** According to Ovid, Troy was built to the music of Apollo's lyre.

51. **Simois**, a small stream in Troas. 65. **fruit . . . gold**, a golden apple from the garden of the Hesperides, daughters of Hesperus, or Night. 72. **oread**, a mountain nymph. 74. **married brows**, meeting eyebrows, regarded as a mark of beauty in the East. 79. **Peleus**, king of Thessaly, who had gathered the gods to witness his marriage to the sea nymph Thetis. 80. **feud.** Eris, the goddess of discord, angered at not being invited, threw among the guests a golden apple marked "for the most beautiful." It was claimed by Juno (Heré), wife of Jupiter and queen of heaven; by Minerva (Pallas), goddess of wisdom; and by Venus (Aphrodite), goddess of love. 81. **Iris**, goddess of the rainbow, the messenger of the gods.

Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon; one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piny sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies; and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarlèd boughs
With bunch and berry and flower through and through.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flowed a golden cloud, and leaned
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her to whom
Coming through heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestioned, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
And river-sundered champaign clothed with corn,
Or labored mine undrainable of ore.
Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-thronged beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the scepter-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attained
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flattered his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and barèd limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

" 'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
                                        Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiased by self-profit, oh, rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a god's,
To push thee forward through a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled through all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'
                                        Here she ceased,
And Paris pondered, and I cried, 'O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountained Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,

---

102. **peacock.** The peacock was sacred to Juno. 112. **champaign,** a stretch of flat open country. **corn,** grain, wheat. 122. **throned of wisdom,** put in high place by wisdom. 126. **A shepherd . . . king-born.** Because of a prophecy at the birth of Paris that he would ruin his country he was left to perish on Mt. Ida, but he was found by a peasant and brought up as a shepherd.

136-137. **limbs . . . spear.** The spear was carried across her body and over one shoulder. 151. **Sequel of guerdon,** the giving of a reward for choosing me. 170. **Idalian,** so called from one of her favorite seats, Idalium, a mountain city in Cyprus.

Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder; from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whispered in his ear, 'I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
She spoke and laughed; I shut my sight for fear;
But when I looked, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I passed by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips pressed
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Fostered the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep through them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moonlit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruined folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of gods and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Even on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Sealed it with kisses? watered it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live;
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids; let me die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born. Her child! — a shudder comes
Across me; never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth

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171. **Paphian.** The city of Paphos, in Cyprus, was the center of the worship of Venus. 183. **The fairest,** Helen of Troy. 195. **wanton pard,** sportive leopard. 204. **They,** the Trojan shipbuilders.

220. **The Abominable.** Eris. (See note on line 80.) 242. **I will not die alone.** Œnone was gifted with prophecy and the art of healing. She told Paris that he would be wounded and that she alone could cure him. When he came to her later, she avenged his act of desertion by refusing to aid him. 257. **the Greek woman,** Helen of Troy.

Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armèd men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

(1832, 1842)

## THE PALACE OF ART

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnished brass,
I chose. The rangèd ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his steadfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily:
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide."

Four courts I made, East, West and South and North,
In each a squarèd lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branched like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipped down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain streamed below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seemed
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odor steamed
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never failed,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light aerial gallery, golden-railed,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stained and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadowed grots of arches interlaced,
And tipped with frost-like spires.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Through which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puffed cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathèd bugle-horn.

One seemed all dark and red — a tract of sand,
And someone pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One showed an iron coast and angry waves.
You seemed to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

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259. **Cassandra**, the daughter of Priam. She was gifted with prophetic power.

*The Palace of Art.* See Critical Notes.

16. **Sleeps . . . ring.** As seen through the telescope, the shadow of the planet Saturn, thrown on the luminous ring surrounding the planet, appears to be motionless. 30. **lent . . . lands**, gave a wide view of distant lands.

49. **traced**, ornamented.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags;
Beyond, a line of heights; and higher
All barred with long white cloud the scornful crags;
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twilight poured
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep — all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there,
Not less than truth designed.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-walled city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily;
An angel looked at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bowed to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watched by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear,
To list a footfall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stayed the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrailed,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sailed
A summer fanned with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasped,
From off her shoulder backward borne;
From one hand drooped a crocus; one hand grasped
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flushed Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot through the sky
Above the pillared town.

Nor these alone; but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself was there,
Not less than life designed.

· · · · ·

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild;
And there the world-worn Dante grasped his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snowed upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely planned
With cycles of the human tale

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79. **prodigal in oil**, rich in olive oil. 80. **hoary to the wind.** The wind turned up the whitish-gray undersides of the olive leaves. 99. **Saint Cecily**, St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music and inventor of the organ (3d cent.). 102. **Houris.** According to the Moslem faith, the Houris are beautiful maidens who will be the companions of true believers in paradise. The Moslems are known also as Islamites. 105. **Uther's . . . son**, King Arthur (see *Morte d'Arthur*, line 5, page 38). 107. **Avalon**, in Celtic mythology, the Land of the Blessed, or Isle of Souls, an earthly paradise in the western seas.

111. **Ausonian king**, Numa Pompilius, the legendary second king of Rome, who is said to have been instructed by the nymph Egeria. Ausonia is a poetic name for Italy. 113. **engrailed**, indented in curved lines. 115. **Cama**, the god of love in Hindu mythology. He is frequently represented as riding on a parrot. 117. **Europa**, a princess of Phœnicia whom Zeus, in the form of a white bull, carried off to Crete. 121. **Ganymede**, a beautiful Trojan boy whom Zeus, in the form of an eagle, carried off to Olympus to be cupbearer to the gods. 126. **supreme Caucasian mind**, an illustration of Tennyson's worship of his own race. Cf. *Locksley Hall*, 184, page 49. 137. **the Ionian father**, Homer.

Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toiled onward, pricked with goads and stings;
Here played, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod; and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne;
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And through the topmost oriels' colored flame
Two godlike faces gazed below:
Plato the wise, and large-browed Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazoned fair
In diverse raiment strange;

Through which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flushed in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echoed song
Throb through the ribbéd stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: "All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me." She — when young night divine
Crowned dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollowed moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapped her hands and cried,
"I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich and wide
Be flattered to the height.

"O all things fair to sate my various eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My gods, with whom I dwell!

"O godlike isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

"In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep."

Then of the moral instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplished Fate;
And at the last she said:

"I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all."

. . . . . .

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flashed through her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prospered; so three years
She prospered; on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck through with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

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149-156. These lines refer to the people of France before and during the French Revolution. The tiger (line 151) may represent rebellion, the athlete (line 153) democracy, and the sick man (line 155) anarchy. 163. **Plato**, a famous Greek philosopher (427-347 B.C.). **Verulam**, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), who was made Baron Verulam by James I in 1618. 171-172. **Memnon . . . melodies**, a large statue near Thebes, in Upper Egypt, said to give forth music when hit by the rays of the morning sun.

186. **anadems**, garlands. 188. **moons of gems**, gems hollowed out for lamps. 203-204. **devil . . . deep**, a reference to the devils cast out of two men in *Matthew*, 8:32. —"And he said unto them, 'Go.' And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine; and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters." 219. **Like Herod**, etc. After Herod had spoken to the people from the throne, "the people gave a shout, saying, 'It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.' And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory" (*Acts*, 12:21-23).

When she would think, where'er she turned her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself; again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength," she said,
"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seemed my soul,
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal;

A still salt pool, locked in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore, that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white;

A star that with the choral starry dance
Joined not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Rolled round by one fixed law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curled.
"No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,
"No voice breaks through the stillness of this world;
One deep, deep silence all!"

She, moldering with the dull earth's moldering sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seemed to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall:

As in strange lands a traveler walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moonrise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts; then thinketh, "I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howled aloud, "I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"

So when four years were wholly finished,
She threw her royal robes away.
"Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
"Where I may mourn and pray.

"Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built;
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt."

(1832, 1842)

## LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown;
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired;
The daughter of a hundred earls,
You are not one to be desired.

---

227. **Mene**, the first word of the mysterious writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, meaning "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it." Daniel interpreted the writing. (See *Daniel*, 5:17-31.) 242. **fretted**, wrinkled. 253-256. **star . . . law.** The star represents the soul. It stood aloof as the universe swept by, but it saw that life in all its seeming confusion is yet subject to a controlling law.

*Lady Clara Vere de Vere.* See Critical Notes.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that dotes on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For, were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head.
Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
Oh, your sweet eyes, your low replies!
A great enchantress you may be;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a specter in your hall;
The guilt of blood is at your door;
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fixed a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue heavens above us bent
The gardener Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and towers;
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands?
Oh, teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew;
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

*(1833; 1842)*

## THE LOTOS-EATERS

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flushed; and, dewed with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown
In the red West; through mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seemed the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

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*The Lotos-Eaters.* See Critical Notes.
23. **galingale**, a kind of grasslike herb.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then someone said, "We will return no more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

## CHORIC SONG

### 1

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

### 2

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest; why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

### 3

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

### 4

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence — ripen, fall, and cease;
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

### 5

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whispered speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

### 6

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears; but all hath suffered change;

---

44. **island home,** Ithaca, off the west coast of Greece.

For surely now our household hearths are cold,
Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The gods are hard to reconcile;
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

7

But, propped on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet — while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly —
With half-dropped eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave through the thick-twined vine —
To watch the emerald-colored water falling
Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

8

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak,
The Lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone;
Through every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centered in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whispered — down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.
(1832, 1842)

## A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I read, before my eyelids dropped their shade,
*The Legend of Good Women*, long ago
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill

---

120. **island princes**, princes from other islands near Greece. 133. **amaranth**, an imaginary flower supposed never to fade. **moly**, a fabulous herb of magic power. It was given by Hermes (the messenger of the gods) to Ulysses as a protection against Circe, the enchantress. 142. **acanthus-wreath.** The acanthus was a plant sacred to the gods.

169-170. **Elysian . . . asphodel.** The Elysian Fields, the paradise of the Greeks, were said by Homer to be covered with asphodels (daffodils).

*A Dream of Fair Women.* 2. **The Legend of Good Women**, a poem written by Chaucer about 1385 in praise of women who had proved faithful in love. The only one of Chaucer's women appearing in Tennyson's poem is Cleopatra. 5. **Dan**, master (from Latin *dominus*).

The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, though my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renownéd brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars;

And clattering flints battered with clanging hoofs;
And I saw crowds in columned sanctuaries,
And forms that passed at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold, heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall,
Lances in ambush set;

And high shrine-doors burst through with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire;
White surf wind-scattered over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hushed seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the selfsame way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seemed to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguered town;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Streamed onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Rolled on each other, rounded, smoothed, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wandered far
In an old wood; fresh-washed in coolest dew
The maiden splendors of the morning star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red Morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fallen across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulcher
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turned
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,
And at the root through lush green grasses burned
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drenched in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Poured back into my empty soul and frame

---

7. **spacious times.** The period of Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603) is noted for its tremendous literary activity. 27. **tortoise . . . wall,** shields interlocked over the soldiers' heads, and used in Roman warfare as a protection against missiles thrown from the walls. A movable shed was also used for this purpose. Pinnacles and parapets (line 26) are parts of walls used as battlements.

72. **anemone.** The Greeks believed that the anemone sprang from tears dropped by Venus as she wept in the forest over the death of her lover Adonis. 76. **lawn,** an open place in a forest.

The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear undertone
Thrilled through mine ears in that unblissful clime,
"Pass freely through; the wood is all thine own
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stiller than chiseled marble, standing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech; she turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place:

"I had great beauty; ask thou not my name;
No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady; in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"
I answered free; and turning I appealed
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws;
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse;
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place
Which men called Aulis in those iron years;
My father held his hand upon his face;
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak; my voice was thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flickered as they lay afloat;
The crowds, the temples, wavered, and the shore;
The bright death quivered at the victim's throat —
Touched — and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow:
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank through the silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping sea:
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a flowery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unrolled:
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began:
"I governed men by change, and so I swayed
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

"The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humor ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood;
That makes my only woe.

"Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee friend,
Where is Mark Antony?

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck; we sat as god by god;
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

"We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which out-burned Canopus. Oh, my life
In Egypt! Oh, the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

---

85. **a lady**, Helen of Troy, the wife of Menelaus. She was beguiled away by Paris, the son of Priam, and thus became the cause of the Trojan War. (See *Œnone*, page 20.) 100. **one**, Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, the leader of the Greeks in the expedition against Troy. She was doomed to be sacrificed because her father had slain a stag sacred to Diana. The sacrifice took place at Aulis (line 106), on the Bœotian coast, where the goddess becalmed the Greek fleet until her wrath was appeased. According to other versions of the story, Diana allowed a hind to be substituted in Iphigenia's place. 101. **averse**, turned away.

127. **A queen**, Cleopatra, queen of Egypt (69-30 B.C.). The description was suggested largely by Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. The historical Cleopatra was a Greek and hence probably fair and blue-eyed. She is here presented artistically, not historically. 139. **Cæsar**, Octavius Cæsar, whom she could not captivate. She did captivate Julius Cæsar and Mark Antony. 145. **Libyan.** Libya was the name given to Africa by the ancient Greeks. 146. **Canopus**, one of the brightest stars in the heavens.

"And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailéd Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die!

"And there he died; and when I heard my name
Sighed forth with life, I would not brook my fear
Of the other; with a worm I balked his fame.
What else was left? look here!"—

With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polished argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.—

"I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name forever!—lying robed and crowned,
Worthy a Roman spouse."

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided through all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and filled with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipped his keenest darts;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of someone coming through the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird
That claps his wings at dawn:

"The torrent brooks of hallowed Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling through the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

"The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams divine;
All night the splintered crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine."

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, through the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charmed and tied
To where he stands—so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow;

The daughter of the warrior, Gileadite,
A maiden pure; as when she went along
From Mizpeh's towered gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth: "Heaven heads the count of crimes
With that wild oath." She rendered answer high:
"Not so, nor once alone; a thousand times
I would be born and die.

"Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

"My God, my land, my father—these did move
Me from my bliss of life that Nature gave,
Lowered softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

"And I went mourning, 'No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers'—emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

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150. **Hercules . . . Antony.** Antony claimed to be descended from Hercules, and imitated him in dress. 155. **worm . . . fame.** Antony was defeated in a naval engagement with Octavius in 31 B.C. A year later he committed suicide. After his death Cleopatra committed suicide by the bite of a snake (worm) rather than be carried captive to Rome by Octavius. 158. **argent,** whiteness. 178. **someone,** the daughter of Jephthah, a mighty warrior of Gilead (*Judges*, 11). He led the Israelites against the Ammonites and vowed that if he were victorious he would sacrifice to God the first thing that came out of his house to meet him on his return to his home in Mizpeh. His daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances. *Mizpeh* means *watchtower*. 179. **crested bird,** probably the lark.

203-204. **a thousand times . . . die.** She means that she would die a thousand times rather than allow her father to break his vow. 213. **mourning.** She retired to the mountains with her companions to bewail her virginity, for it was considered a disgrace for a Hebrew woman to die without a son.

"Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

"The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darkened glen,

"Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

"When the next moon was rolled into the sky,
Strength came to me that equaled my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire!

"It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's will;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

"Moreover it is written that my race
Hewed Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth." Here her face
Glowed, as I looked at her.

She locked her lips; she left me where I stood:
"Glory to God," she sang, and passed afar,
Thridding the somber boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

"Alas! alas!" a low voice, full of care,
Murmured beside me: "Turn and look on me;
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

"Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor!
O me, that I should ever see the light!
Those dragon eyes of angered Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night."

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust;
To whom the Egyptian: "Oh, you tamely died!
You should have clung to Fulvia's waist, and thrust
The dagger through her side."

With that sharp sound the white dawn's creeping beams,
Stolen to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broadened on the borders of the dark
Ere I saw her who clasped in her last trance
Her murdered father's head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compassed, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again!
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blessed,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be expressed
By sighs or groans or tears;

Because all words, though culled with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat. (1832, 1842)

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237. **it is written,** etc. Jephthah "smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter" (*Judges*, 11:33). 239. **Arnon,** a river flowing into the Dead Sea. 243. **Thridding . . . boskage,** threading the dark thickets. 251. **Rosamond,** Rosamond Clifford, the mistress of Henry II (1154-89), said to have been slain or forced to drink poison by Henry's jealous queen, Eleanor (line 255), at Woodstock in 1177.

258. **the Egyptian,** Cleopatra, who, thinking of her own tragedy, substitutes the name of Fulvia, Antony's wife, for that of Eleanor. 263. **captain of my dreams,** Venus, the morning star. 266. **her,** Margaret Roper, daughter of Sir Thomas More (1478-1535). After his execution his head was exposed on London Bridge; but she got permission to take it down, and, after preserving it until her death, was buried with it in her arms. 267. **Joan of Arc,** the inspired French maiden who led the French army to victory against the English in 1428. Later she was captured and burned at the stake, 1431. 269. **her,** Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I of England. She accompanied her husband to the Holy Land in 1269, and when he was stabbed with a dagger supposed to have been poisoned, she sucked the blood from the wound until the surgeons were ready to dress it.

## SAINT AGNES' EVE

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon;
My breath to heaven like vapor goes;
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord.
Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soiled and dark,
To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
Through all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The Sabbaths of Eternity,
One Sabbath deep and wide —
A light upon the shining sea —
The Bridegroom with his bride! (1837)

## YOU ASK ME, WHY, THOUGH ILL AT EASE

You ask me, why, though ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land where, girt with friends or foes,
A man may speak the thing he will;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent;

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute,

Though power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great —
Though every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.
(*c. 1833;* 1842)

## OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet;
Above her shook the starry lights;
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gathered in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stepped she down through town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men revealed
The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, godlike, grasps the triple forks,
And, king-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears;

---

*Saint Agnes' Eve.* St. Agnes was a Roman virgin who suffered martyrdom about the year 300. According to ancient legend it was possible for a pure maiden on St. Agnes' Eve (January 21) to have a vision of her future husband. The poem is supposed to be spoken by a nun who embodies the spirit of St. Agnes. Here it is the Heavenly Bridegroom that the maiden longs to see. For a different treatment of the legend see Keats's *The Eve of St. Agnes.*

16. **argent round,** the silver moon at the full.

*You Ask Me, Why.* See Critical Notes.

*Of Old Sat Freedom.* 14. **isle-altar,** England. 15. **Who . . . forks.** Rolfe quotes Tennyson for the statement that the figure represents Jove, the triple forks being his thunderbolts.

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes! (*c. 1833;* 1842)

## LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH LOVE FAR-BROUGHT

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied past, and used
Within the present, but transfused
Through future time by power of thought;

True love turned round on fixéd poles,
Love that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Though sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years;
Cut Prejudice against the grain.
But gentle words are always gain;
Regard the weakness of thy peers.

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
Of pension, neither count on praise —
It grows to guerdon after-days.
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw,
Not mastered by some modern term,
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm;
And in its season bring the law,

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life that, working strongly, binds —
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Through many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,
And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom —
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-developed strength awaits
Completion in a painful school;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly joined,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh, yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armèd foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rained in blood;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope through shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace;

Not less, though dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,

---

*Love Thou Thy Land.* 12. **lime**, ensnare, trap. 37-40. **For . . . form.** According to medieval thinking, the nature of a body was determined by the proportion of four qualities —hot, cold, moist, and dry.

64. **great contrivances**, a reference to the building of battleships and a prophecy of the airship. Cf. *Locksley Hall*, lines 119-124, page 47.

Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes;
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke.

Tomorrow yet would reap today,
As we bear blossom of the dead;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

(*c. 1833;* 1842)

## ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O thou that sendest out the man
To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrenched their rights from thee!

What wonder if in noble heat
Those men thine arms withstood,
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,
And in thy spirit with thee fought —
Who sprang from English blood!

But thou rejoice with liberal joy,
Lift up thy rocky face,
And shatter, when the storms are black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
The seas that shock thy base!

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine — the single note
From that deep chord which Hampden smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

(1842)

## THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve —
The game of forfeits done — the girls all kissed
Beneath the sacred bush and passed away —
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard Hall,
The host, and I sat round the wassail-bowl,
Then half-way ebbed; and there we held a talk,
How all the old honor had from Christmas gone,
Or gone or dwindled down to some odd games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired out
With cutting eights that day upon the pond,
Where, three times slipping from the outer edge,
I bumped the ice into three several stars,
Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
The parson taking wide and wider sweeps,
Now harping on the church-commissioners,
Now hawking at geology and schism;
Until I woke, and found him settled down
Upon the general decay of faith
Right through the world: "at home was little left,
And none abroad; there was no anchor, none,
To hold by." Francis, laughing, clapped his hand
On Everard's shoulder, with "I hold by him."
"And I," quoth Everard, "by the wassail-bowl."
"Why yes," I said, "we knew your gift that way
At college; but another which you had —
I mean of verse (for so we held it then)—
What came of that?" "You know," said Frank, "he burnt
His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve books"—
And then to me, demanding why: "Oh, sir,
He thought that nothing new was said, or else
Something so said 'twas nothing — that a truth
Looks freshest in the fashion of the day;
God knows; he has a mint of reasons; ask.
It pleased *me* well enough." "Nay, nay," said Hall,
"Why take the style of those heroic times?
For nature brings not back the mastodon,
Nor we those times; and why should any man
Remodel models? These twelve books of mine
Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-worth,
Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt."
"But I,"
Said Francis, "picked the eleventh from this hearth,
And have it; keep a thing, its use will come.
I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes."
He laughed, and I, though sleepy, like a horse
That hears the corn-bin open, pricked my ears;
For I remembered Everard's college fame
When we were freshmen. Then at my request
He brought it; and the poet, little urged,

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*England and America in 1782.* Tennyson states that this poem is supposed to be spoken by a liberal Englishman at the time of the recognition of American independence.

19. **Hampden,** John Hampden (1594-1643), a Parliamentary leader who in 1635 refused to pay taxes to build warships on the principle that taxation without representation is tyranny. This was the cry of the American revolutionists. 20. **doom,** the day of judgment.

*The Epic.* 3. **the sacred bush,** the mistletoe.

15. **church-commissioners.** The Ecclesiastical Commission was a body formed in 1835-36 especially for the purpose of administering the revenues of the Church of England. It had large powers. 16. **geology and schism,** a reference to the growing conflict between religion and science. 45. **corn-bin,** grain-bin.

But with some prelude of disparagement,
Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music, and to this result.
(*c. 1836;* 1842)

## MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea,
Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
  Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of today unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made —
Though Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more — but let what will be be,
I am so deeply smitten through the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride; for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I rowed across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."
  To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
A little thing may harm a wounded man.
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."
  So saying, from the ruined shrine he stepped
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.
  There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewelry. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.
  Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"
  And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."
  To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale,
"Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."
  Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:
"And if indeed I cast the brand away,

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*Morte d'Arthur.* See Critical Notes.
4. **Lyonness,** a district often mentioned in Arthurian romance. According to tradition it sank beneath the sea, its position being thereafter marked only by islands off the extreme point of Cornwall. 21. **Camelot,** the city of King Arthur's court. 23. **Merlin,** the magician and prophet of Arthur's court. 31. **samite,** a kind of heavy silk stuff.

80. **lief,** beloved. 86. **curiously,** elaborately, elegantly.

Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Someone might show it at a just of arms,
Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence;
But now much honor and much fame were lost."
So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.
Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily,
"What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."
To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath,
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."
Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipped the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the king.
Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"
And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."
And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."
So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words,
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him through the place of tombs.
But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the king,

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139. **streamer . . . morn**, the Northern lights. 140. **isles of winter**, icebergs.

Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels —
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.
  Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.
  Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood; for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne — were parched with dust;
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the king;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
  Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
  And slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go —
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it lies

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186. **Dry**, a classical use of the word, meaning *grating*.

232. **light**, the Star of Bethlehem. 240. **The old . . . new.** This poem appeared in 1842, at the climax of the Oxford movement, the Chartist movement, and the Corn Law agitation. Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation had come several years earlier. 254-255. The idea expressed here is a familiar one in literature, being found in Homer, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, and others. See *Paradise Lost, II*, 1051. 259. **Avilion, Avalon.** (See note on line 107 of *The Palace of Art*, page 25.)

Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light, that long
Had winked and threatened darkness, flared and fell;
At which the parson, sent to sleep with sound,
And waked with silence, grunted "Good!" but we
Sat rapt; it was the tone with which he read —
Perhaps some modern touches here and there
Redeemed it from the charge of nothingness —
Or else we loved the man, and prized his work;
I know not; but we sitting, as I said,
The cock crew loud, as at that time of year
The lusty bird takes every hour for dawn.
Then Francis, muttering, like a man ill-used,
"There now — that's nothing!" drew a little back,
And drove his heel into the smoldered log,
That sent a blast of sparkles up the flue.
And so to bed, where yet in sleep I seemed
To sail with Arthur under looming shores,
Point after point; till on to dawn, when dreams
Begin to feel the truth and stir of day,
To me, methought, who waited with the crowd,
There came a bark that, blowing forward, bore
King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
Of stateliest port; and all the people cried,
"Arthur is come again; he cannot die."
Then those that stood upon the hills behind
Repeated — "Come again, and thrice as fair";
And, further inland, voices echoed — "Come
With all good things, and war shall be no more."
At this a hundred bells began to peal,
That with the sound I woke, and heard indeed
The clear church-bells ring in the Christmas morn. (*c. 1835;* 1842)

## DORA

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often looked at them,
And often thought, "I'll make them man and wife."
Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
And yearned toward William; but the youth, because
He had been always with her in the house,
Thought not of Dora.
Then there came a day
When Allan called his son, and said: "My son,
I married late, but I would wish to see
My grandchild on my knees before I die;
And I have set my heart upon a match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her age.
She is my brother's daughter; he and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I bred
His daughter Dora. Take her for your wife;
For I have wished this marriage, night and day,
For many years." But William answered short:
"I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora!" Then the old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands, and said:
"You will not, boy! you dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
Consider, William, take a month to think,
And let me have an answer to my wish,
Or, by the Lord that made me, you shall pack,
And never more darken my doors again."
But William answered madly, bit his lips,
And broke away. The more he looked at her
The less he liked her; and his ways were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then before
The month was out he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he wooed and wed
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
Then, when the bells were ringing, Allan called

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266-267. **swan . . . death.** According to ancient tradition the swan always sang just before death. 278. **modern touches.** See line 240 and note. In *The Idylls of the King* Tennyson was liberal with "modern touches." See *To the Queen*, 35ff., page 148. 294. **a modern gentleman.** The model for King Arthur was Prince Albert, the husband of Queen Victoria. See the Dedication to *The Idylls of the King*, page 119.

*Dora.* See Critical Notes.

His niece and said: "My girl, I love you well;
But if you speak with him that was my son,
Or change a word with her he calls his wife,
My home is none of yours. My will is law."
And Dora promised, being meek. She thought,
"It cannot be; my uncle's mind will change!"
And days went on, and there was born a boy
To William; then distresses came on him,
And day by day he passed his father's gate,
Heart-broken, and his father helped him not.
But Dora stored what little she could save,
And sent it them by stealth, nor did they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he died.
Then Dora went to Mary. Mary sat
And looked with tears upon her boy, and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and said:
"I have obeyed my uncle until now,
And I have sinned, for it was all through me
This evil came on William at the first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's gone,
And for your sake, the woman that he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you.
You know there has not been for these five years
So full a harvest. Let me take the boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat, that when his heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the boy,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone."
And Dora took the child, and went her way
Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound
That was unsown, where many poppies grew.
Far off the farmer came into the field
And spied her not, for none of all his men
Dare tell him Dora waited with the child;
And Dora would have risen and gone to him,
But her heart failed her; and the reapers reaped,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
But when the morrow came, she rose and took
The child once more, and sat upon the mound;
And made a little wreath of all the flowers
That grew about, and tied it round his hat
To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.
Then when the farmer passed into the field
He spied her, and he left his men at work,
And came and said: "Where were you yesterday?
Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"
So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,
And answered softly, "This is William's child!"
"And did I not," said Allan, "did I not
Forbid you, Dora?" Dora said again:
"Do with me as you will, but take the child,
And bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"
And Allan said: "I see it is a trick
Got up betwixt you and the woman there.
I must be taught my duty, and by you!
You knew my word was law, and yet you dared
To slight it. Well — for I will take the boy;
But go you hence, and never see me more."
So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud
And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell
At Dora's feet. She bowed upon her hands,
And the boy's cry came to her from the field
More and more distant. She bowed down her head,
Remembering the day when first she came,
And all the things that had been. She bowed down
And wept in secret; and the repears reaped,
And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.
Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood
Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy
Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise
To God, that helped her in her widowhood.
And Dora said: "My uncle took the boy;
But, Mary, let me live and work with you.
He says that he will never see me more."
Then answered Mary: "This shall never be,
That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself;
And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,
For he will teach him hardness, and to slight
His mother. Therefore thou and I will go,
And I will have my boy, and bring him home;
And I will beg of him to take thee back.
But if he will not take thee back again,
Then thou and I will live within one house,
And work for William's child, until he grows
Of age to help us."
So the women kissed
Each other, and set out, and reached the farm.
The door was off the latch; they peeped, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his arm,
And clapped him on the hands and on the cheeks,
Like one that loved him; and the lad stretched out
And babbled for the golden seal that hung
From Allan's watch and sparkled by the fire.
Then they came in; but when the boy beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to her;
And Allan set him down, and Mary said
"O father! — if you let me call you so —

I never came a-begging for myself,
Or William, or this child; but now I come
For Dora; take her back, she loves you well.
O sir, when William died, he died at peace
With all men; for I asked him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me —
I had been a patient wife; but, sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus.
'God bless him!' he said, 'and may he never know
The troubles I have gone through!' Then he turned
His face and passed — unhappy that I am!
But now, sir, let me have my boy, for you
Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight
His father's memory; and take Dora back,
And let all this be as it was before."
So Mary said, and Dora hid her face
By Mary. There was silence in the room;
And all at once the old man burst in sobs:
"I have been to blame — to blame. I have killed my son.
I have killed him — but I loved him — my dear son.
May God forgive me! — I have been to blame.
Kiss me, my children."
Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kissed him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundredfold;
And for three hours he sobbed o'er William's child
Thinking of William.
So those four abode
Within one house together, and as years
Went forward Mary took another mate;
But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

(1842)

## ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known — cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all —
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the scepter and the isle —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me —
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite

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*Ulysses.* See Critical Notes.
3. **an aged wife,** Penelope. The scene is in Ithaca, the home of Ulysses. 10. **Hyades,** a group of seven stars in the constellation Taurus. They were associated with the rainy season.

27. **eternal silence,** a pagan conception of death. 49. **you,** Ulysses's companions. The attitude expressed here is modern.

The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are —
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.
(1842)

## TITHONUS

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground;
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-haired shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.
Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seemed
To his great heart none other than a god!
I asked thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant worked their wills,
And beat me down and marred and wasted me,
And though they could not end me, left me maimed
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, though even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go; take back thy gift.
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?
A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renewed.
Thy cheek begins to redden through the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.
Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence; then, before thine answer given,
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.
Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."
Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch — if I be he that watched —
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimsoned all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kissed
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.
Yet hold me not forever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold

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63. **the Happy Isles**, the Islands of the Blest, identified with the Elysian Fields as the abode of just men after death. 64. **Achilles**, the most famous of the Greek heroes in the Trojan War. At Troy he slew Hector and dragged his body three times around the walls. Achilles was finally killed by Paris, who wounded him with a poisoned arrow in the heel, his only vulnerable spot. The arms of Achilles were awarded to Ulysses. 65-70. These lines contain Tennyson's favorite doctrine of the unconquerable will.

*Tithonus.* Tithonus was the son of Laomedon, king of Troy, and the husband of Aurora, goddess of the dawn. Aurora asked the gods to grant Tithonus immortality, but she neglected to ask for him also eternal youth, and he became so withered and ugly that she turned him into a grasshopper. Cf. the fate of the Struldbrugs in Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, III, 10.

18. **Hours**, the goddesses who cause all things to come into being, to ripen, and to decay at the appointed time.

25. **the silver star**, the morning star. 29. **kindly**, natural. 39. **team**, the steeds that drew Aurora's chariot up to Mt. Olympus to announce the coming of the day. 63. **Ilion**, Troy, the walls of which were said to have been built to the music of Apollo's lyre. Apollo (line 62) was the god of poetry and music.

Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground.
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave;
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn,
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

(*c. 1842;* 1860)

## LOCKSLEY HALL

Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn;
Leave me here, and when you want me, sound upon the bugle-horn.

'Tis the place, and all around it, as of old, the curlews call,
Dreary gleams about the moorland flying over Locksley Hall;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracts,
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade,
Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid.

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sublime
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed;
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed;

When I dipped into the future far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world and all the wonder that would be. —

In the spring a fuller crimson comes upon the robin's breast;
In the spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Then her cheek was pale and thinner than should be for one so young,
And her eyes on all my motions with a mute observance hung.

And I said, "My cousin Amy, speak and speak the truth to me;
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee."

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

And she turned — her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs —
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes —

Saying, "I have hid my feelings, fearing they should do me wrong";
Saying, "Dost thou love me, cousin?" weeping, "I have loved thee long."

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands;
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
And her whisper thronged my pulses with the fullness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!

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*Locksley Hall.* See Critical Notes.

4. *gleams* may be taken as in apposition to *curlews* (line 3), or the entire phrase may be an absolute construction. 8. **Orion**, one of the most conspicuous constellations in the heavens. 9. **the Pleiads**, a group of seven stars in the constellation Taurus.

19. **iris . . . dove.** The rainbow colors on the dove's neck become brighter during the mating season.

O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy? — having known me — to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse.

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him, take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his brain is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies, touch him with thy lighter thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy things to understand —
Better thou wert dead before me, though I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from the heart's disgrace,
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace.

Curséd be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Curséd be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!

Curséd be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule!
Curséd be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the fool!

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster! —
Hadst thou less unworthy proved —
Would to God — for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, though my heart be at the root.

Never — though my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-wintered crow that leads the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love her, as I knew her, kind?

I remember one that perished; sweetly did she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love her for the love she bore?
No — she never loved me truly; love is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorned of devils! this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn it, lest thy heart be put to proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flickers, and the shadows rise and fall.

Then a hand shall pass before thee, pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widowed marriage-pillows, to the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the "Never, never," whispered by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears;

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42. **Puppet . . . tongue.** Her father and mother forced her to marry another—a man of coarser nature.

68. **crow**, rook. 75. **comfort . . . devils**, as in *Paradise Lost*, I and II. 76. **That . . . things.** Many poets express this idea. Dante says in *Inferno*, 5, 121, "There is no greater sorrow than to remember happy times when one is in misery." 79. **he**, Amy's husband, a fox-hunting squire.

And an eye shall vex thee looking ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow; get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace; for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.

Oh, the child too clothes the father with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will be worthy of the two.

Oh, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart.

"They were dangerous guides, the feelings — she herself was not exempt —
Truly, she herself had suffered" — Perish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it — lower yet — be happy! wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.

What is that which I should turn to, lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys.

Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy; what is that which I should do?

I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds are laid with sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will turn that earlier page.
Hide me from my deep emotion, O thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and the tumult of my life;

Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky highway near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new;
That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be;

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew
From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples plunging through the thunder-storm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.

There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapped in universal law.

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104. **winds are laid.** There was an old idea that the discharge of cannon during a battle stilled the winds.

121-128. These lines are regarded as a prophetic glimpse of modern aviation and of battles between airships. 128. Compare the idea of the present League of Nations.

So I triumphed ere my passion sweeping through me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things here are out of joint.
Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not harvest of his youthful joys,
Though the deep heart of existence beat forever like a boy's?

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me, sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion were a target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moldered string?
I am shamed through all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weakness! woman's pleasure, woman's pain —
Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain.

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, matched with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens, nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell my father evil-starred —
I was left a trampled orphan, and a selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day —

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise;

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramped no longer shall have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinewed, they shall dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and hurl their lances in the sun;

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over miserable books —

Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child.

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132. **jaundiced**, prejudiced. 135. **a hungry people**, a reference to the "dangerous" advance of democracy felt in the discontent which preceded the Revolution of 1848. 138. **the process of the suns**, the passing of the years. 141-142. New facts of life crowd in upon us, but fundamental truths are constant. Science and evolution show us that the mass of humanity is more important than the individual. Cf. *In Memoriam*, Section 114, page 86. 150. **motions**, impulses.

155. The hero is represented as having been born in India, the son of a British soldier who fell in battle against the Mahrattas, a people living in central and western India. 162. **trailer**, a trailing vine.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads, vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like a beast with lower pains!

Mated with a squalid savage — what to me were sun or clime?
I the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time —

I that rather held it better men should perish one by one,
Than that earth should stand at gaze like Joshua's moon in Ajalon!

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age — for mine I knew not — help me as when life begun;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash the lightnings, weigh the sun.

Oh, I see the crescent promise of my spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well through all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley Hall!
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, blackening over heath and holt,
Cramming all the blast before it, in its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go. (1842)

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180. **Joshua's moon in Ajalon.** From *Joshua*, 10:12-13. —"Then spake Joshua . . . in the sight of Israel, 'Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.' And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." 181. **beacons**, lights a signal for advance. 182. **grooves.** When Tennyson first rode on a railroad train in 1830, he thought that the wheels ran in a groove. He states that he composed this line at that time (*Memoir*, I, 195). 184. **a cycle of Cathay**, an indefinitely long period spent in China. This is an illustration of Tennyson's somewhat arrogant worship of Western culture. 186. **Rift the hills**, etc. This line probably refers to Francis Baily's experiments (1838-42) for determining the mean density of the earth and the weight of the sun. 190. **for me**, as far as I am concerned.

## GODIVA

*I waited for the train at Coventry;*
*I hung with grooms and porters on the bridge,*
*To watch the three tall spires; and there I shaped*
*The city's ancient legend into this:*

Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well,
And loathed to see them overtaxed; but she
Did more, and underwent, and overcame,
The woman of a thousand summers back,
Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who ruled
In Coventry; for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers brought
Their children, clamoring, "If we pay, we starve!"
She sought her lord, and found him, where he strode
About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their tears,
And prayed him, "If they pay this tax, they starve."
Whereat he stared, replying, half-amazed,
"You would not let your little finger ache
For such as *these?*" — "But I would die," said she.
He laughed, and swore by Peter and by Paul,
Then filliped at the diamond in her ear:
"Oh, ay, ay, ay, you talk!" — "Alas!" she said,
"But prove me what it is I would not do."
And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
He answered, "Ride you naked through the town,
And I repeal it"; and nodding, as in scorn,
He parted, with great strides among his dogs.
So left alone, the passions of her mind,
As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
Made war upon each other for an hour,
Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
The hard condition, but that she would loose
The people; therefore, as they loved her well,
From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
No eye look down, she passing, but that all
Should keep within, door shut, and window barred.

---

*Godiva.* According to the legend here recorded, probably partly true, Godiva was the wife of Leofric, who was Earl of Mercia and Lord of Coventry about 1040; she rode naked through the town as the price of remitting a burdensome tax on her people.

3. **tall spires**, those of St. Michael's Church, Trinity Church, and Christ Church. 28. **Esau**, the son of Isaac and Rebekah. His hands and body were covered with hair. See *Genesis*, 25:21-34.

Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
Unclasped the wedded eagles of her belt,
The grim earl's gift; but ever at a breath
She lingered, looking like a summer moon
Half-dipped in cloud. Anon she shook her head,
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee;
Unclad herself in haste; adown the stair
Stole on; and like a creeping sunbeam slid
From pillar unto pillar, until she reached
The gateway; there she found her palfrey trapped
In purple blazoned with armorial gold.
Then she rode forth, clothed on with chastity.
The deep air listened round her as she rode,
And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout
Had cunning eyes to see; the barking cur
Made her cheek flame; her palfrey's footfall shot
Light horrors through her pulses; the blind walls
Were full of chinks and holes; and overhead
Fantastic gables, crowding, stared; but she
Not less through all bore up, till, last, she saw
The white-flowered elder-thicket from the field
Gleam through the Gothic archway in the wall.
Then she rode back, clothed on with chastity.
And one low churl, compact of thankless earth,
The fatal byword of all years to come,
Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
Peeped — but his eyes, before they had their will,
Were shriveled into darkness in his head,
And dropped before him. So the Powers, who wait
On noble deeds, canceled a sense misused;
And she, that knew not, passed; and all at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clashed and hammered from a hundred towers,
One after one; but even then she gained
Her bower, whence reissuing, robed and crowned,
To meet her lord, she took the tax away
And built herself an everlasting name.

(1842)

## SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel;
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall;
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine;
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns.
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark.
I leap on board; no helmsman steers;
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail;
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Through dreaming towns I go,

---

66. **one low churl.** This was Peeping Tom, a tailor. The name has been applied to others since his time.

*Sir Galahad.* In late versions of the Arthurian legends, Sir Galahad was a famous knight of the Round Table who achieved the quest of the Holy Grail. He was the son of Lancelot. See Critical Notes.

25. **the stormy crescent,** the new moon. 31. **stalls,** seats in the choir and the chancel.

The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight — to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touched, are turned to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And through the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up and shakes and falls.
Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the Holy Grail. (1842)

## THE BEGGAR MAID

Her arms across her breast she laid;
She was more fair than words can say;
Barefooted came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way.
"It is no wonder," said the lords;
"She is more beautiful than day."

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen;
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been.
Cophetua sware a royal oath:
"This beggar maid shall be my queen!"
(1842)

## THE VISION OF SIN

### 1

I had a vision when the night was late;
A youth came riding toward a palace-gate.
He rode a horse with wings, that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down.
And from the palace came a child of sin,
And took him by the curls, and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise.
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips—
As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles and capes —
Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid shapes,
By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine and piles of grapes.

### 2

Then methought I heard a mellow sound,
Gathering up from all the lower ground;
Narrowing in to where they sat assembled,
Low voluptuous music winding trembled,
Woven in circles. They that heard it sighed,
Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
Swung themselves, and in low tones replied;
Till the fountain spouted, showering wide
Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.
Then the music touched the gates and died,
Rose again from where it seemed to fail,
Stormed in orbs of song, a growing gale;
Till thronging in and in, to where they waited,
As 'twere a hundred-throated nightingale,
The strong tempestuous treble throbbed and palpitated;
Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,
Flung the torrent rainbow round.
Then they started from their places,
Moved with violence, changed in hue,
Caught each other with wild grimaces,
Half-invisible to the view,
Wheeling with precipitate paces
To the melody, till they flew,
Hair and eyes and limbs and faces,
Twisted hard in fierce embraces,

---

51. **The cock crows.** According to an old superstition the cock crows all the night before Christmas to drive away evil spirits. 53. **leads,** roofs covered with sheets of lead. 72. See Critical Notes. 82. **park,** a large piece of ground, consisting of woodland and pasture, attached to a country house. **pale,** an enclosed field.

*The Beggar Maid.* According to legend Cophetua, an African king, married a beggar maid, Penelophon. The story is told in Percy's *Reliques* in "King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid."

*The Vision of Sin.* See Critical Notes.

3. **horse with wings,** Pegasus. The youth had high hopes, but he was governed by low impulses. 11. **lawn,** an open space in the woods.

Like to Furies, like to Graces,
Dashed together in blinding dew;
Till, killed with some luxurious agony,
The nerve-dissolving melody
Fluttered headlong from the sky.

3

And then I looked up toward a mountain-tract,
That girt the region with high cliff and lawn.
I saw that every morning, far withdrawn
Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn,
Unheeded; and detaching, fold by fold,
From those still heights, and, slowly drawing near,
A vapor heavy, hueless, formless, cold,
Came floating on for many a month and year,
Unheeded; and I thought I would have spoken,
And warned that madman ere it grew too late,
But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine was broken,
When that cold vapor touched the palace gate,
And linked again. I saw within my head
A gray and gap-toothed man as lean as death,
Who slowly rode across a withered heath,
And lighted at a ruined inn, and said:

4

"Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
Here is custom come your way;
Take my brute, and lead him in,
Stuff his ribs with moldy hay.

"Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
See that sheets are on my bed.
What! the flower of life is past;
It is long before you wed.

"Slip-shod waiter, lank and sour,
At the Dragon on the heath!
Let us have a quiet hour,
Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

"I am old, but let me drink;
Bring me spices, bring me wine;
I remember, when I think,
That my youth was half divine.

"Wine is good for shriveled lips,
When a blanket wraps the day,
When the rotten woodland drips,
And the leaf is stamped in clay.

"Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee;
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

"Let me screw thee up a peg;
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

"Thou shalt not be saved by works,
Thou hast been a sinner too;
Ruined trunks on withered forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

"Fill the cup and fill the can,
Have a rouse before the morn;
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"We are men of ruined blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise.
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

"Name and fame! to fly sublime
Through the courts, the camps, the schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Bandied by the hands of fools.

"Friendship! — to be two in one —
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

"Virtue! — to be good and just —
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mixed with cunning sparks of hell.

"Oh, we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

"Fill the cup and fill the can,
Have a rouse before the morn;
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

"Drink, and let the parties rave;
They are filled with idle spleen,
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

---

41. **Furies,** the three Greek goddesses of vengeance. **Graces,** goddesses representing grace, gentleness, and beauty. 50. There is a suggestion here that the youth still had a chance to redeem himself. 72. **Dragon,** the name of the inn.

96. **rouse,** a bumper of liquor. 99. **We . . . blood.** Cf. Kipling's *Gentlemen-Rankers*, 13-14—
"Gentlemen-rankers out on the spree,
Damned from here to eternity."

"He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power,
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour.

"Fill the can and fill the cup;
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gayly doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

"No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house,
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

"Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

"Drink to lofty hopes that cool —
Visions of a perfect State;
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate.

"Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glowworm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

"Fear not thou to loose thy tongue,
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

"Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could understand
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

"Tell me tales of thy first love —
April hopes, the fools of chance —
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

"Fill the can and fill the cup;
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

"Trooping from their moldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads —
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads!

"You are bones, and what of that?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modeled on a skull.

"Death is king, and Vivat Rex!
Tread a measure on the stones,
Madam — if I know your sex
From the fashion of your bones.

"No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip;
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

"Lo! God's likeness — the ground-plan —
Neither modeled, glazed, nor framed;
Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed!

"Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath!
Drink to heavy Ignorance!
Hob-and-nob with brother Death!

"Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near —
What! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

"Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curled;
Unto me my maudlin gall
And my mockeries of the world.

"Fill the cup and fill the can;
Mingle madness, mingle scorn!
Dregs of life, and lees of man;
Yet we will not die forlorn."

## 5

The voice grew faint; there came a further change;
Once more uprose the mystic mountain-range.
Below were men and horses pierced with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower forms;
By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patched with moss.
Then someone spake: "Behold! it was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore with time."

---

142. **cap upon her brows.** The Goddess of Liberty is represented as holding in her hand a cap, the symbol of freedom. The cap referred to here is the red cap of the French Revolutionists.

179. **Vivat Rex,** Long live the King! 189. **Buss,** kiss. 208. **Once . . . -range.** See lines 46ff.

Another said: “The crime of sense became
The crime of malice, and is equal blame.”
And one: “He had not wholly quenched his power;
A little grain of conscience made him sour.”
At last I heard a voice upon the slope
Cry to the summit, “Is there any hope?”
To which an answer pealed from that high land,
But in a tongue no man could understand;
And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.
(1842)

## BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me. (1842)

## THE POET'S SONG

The rain had fallen, the poet arose,
He passed by the town and out of the street;
A light wind blew from the gates of the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the wheat;
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopped as he hunted the fly,
The snake slipped under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the prey;
And the nightingale thought, “I have sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will be
When the years have died away.” (1842)

## SONGS FROM *THE PRINCESS*

### As through the Land at Eve We Went

As through the land at eve we went,
And plucked the ripened ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out, I know not why,
And kissed again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears!
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kissed again with tears.

### Sweet and Low

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon;
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

### The Splendor Falls on Castle Walls

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,

---

*Break, Break, Break.* This is one of the poems inspired by the death of Tennyson's intimate friend, Arthur Hallam. See *In Memoriam*, page 57, and notes.

**11. a vanished hand,** Hallam's.

*Songs from The Princess.* See Critical Notes.

*As through the Land.* This song stands between Part I and Part II. It is in contrast with Ida's ideas about the worth of children.

*Sweet and Low.* This song stands between Part II and Part III. It emphasizes the love for children.

*The Splendor Falls.* This song stands between Part III and Part IV. It emphasizes the immortality of the influence of love. The song was suggested by the echoes from a bugle heard by Tennyson on the Lakes of Killarney, in Ireland, in 1848.

And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow forever and forever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

## TEARS, IDLE TEARS

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean;
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

## O SWALLOW, SWALLOW

O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died!

Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green?

O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown;
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.

## THY VOICE IS HEARD

Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

---

10. **Elfland.** The echoes sound as if they came from fairyland, which in Ireland is always close to the world of mortals.

*Tears, Idle Tears.* This song, from Part IV, is sung by one of the maidens in Ida's tent, in the presence of Ida and her maidens and of the three men disguised as women. It expresses the maiden's longing for the past. See Critical Notes.

*O Swallow, Swallow.* This song is sung by the disguised prince in response to Ida's request for a song of promise rather than one of retrospect like the one she had just heard, *Tears, Idle Tears.* It is a song of a lover of the North as he watches a swallow speed southward in the autumn. His lady-love is in the South. In *The Princess* Ida is referred to as the Princess "from the South."

4. **thou that knowest each.** The swallow knows both the North and the South since it migrates from one to the other according to the season of the year. 4-6. He fears a rival in the South.

*Thy Voice Is Heard.* This song is sung by one of the maidens at the end of Part IV. It is a song of courage inspired by domestic love, and strikes the keynote of the warlike section that follows it.

### HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD

Home they brought her warrior dead,
She nor swooned nor uttered cry.
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Called him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stepped,
Took the face-cloth from the face;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."

### OUR ENEMIES HAVE FALLEN

Our enemies have fallen, have fallen; the seed,
The little seed they laughed at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

Our enemies have fallen, have fallen. They came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears; they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand;
They marked it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fallen themselves.

Our enemies have fallen, have fallen; they came,
The woodmen with their axes; lo, the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

Our enemies have fallen, have fallen; they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;
The glittering ax was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shattered to the shoulder blade.

Our enemies have fallen, but this shall grow
A night of summer from the heat, a breadth
Of autumn, dropping fruits of power; and rolled
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

### ASK ME NO MORE

Ask me no more—the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answered thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more—what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye;
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more—thy fate and mine are sealed;
I strove against the stream and all in vain;
Let the great river take me to the main.
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

### NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL

Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font.
The firefly wakens; waken thou with me.

Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

---

*Home They Brought Her Warrior Dead.* This song stands between Part V and Part VI. It comes after the battle and fittingly stresses the duty and the joy of motherhood.

*Our Enemies Have Fallen.* This song is sung by Ida in Part VI, as she holds Psyche's babe in her arms. The battle is over; the Prince's warriors have been defeated; many have been wounded on both sides; and Ida has generously offered "the tender ministries of female hands and hospitality."

*Ask Me No More.* This song stands between Part VI and Part VII. It is an expression of the slow yielding of reluctant love. The college has been turned into a hospital; Ida's purpose has been abandoned, and many maidens have gone home.

*Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal.* This song was read aloud by the Princess as she watched at night by the wounded Prince, in Part VII.

7. The earth is compared to Danaë, the princess whom Zeus in the form of a golden shower visited in a tower of brass in which her father had imprisoned her.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake.
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.

### Come Down, O Maid

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height.
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang),
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But cease to move so near the heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the Silver Horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropped upon the firths of ice;
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.
But follow; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air.
So waste not thou, but come; for all the vales
Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee; the children call, and I,
Thy shepherd, pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

(1850)

---

*Come Down, O Maid.* This song also was read aloud by the Princess. It is a call for her to forsake a life of isolation and lonely thought and to ally herself with natural human needs and loves.

12. **foxlike in the vine.** Cf. *The Song of Solomon,* 2:15—"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." 13. **the Silver Horns,** the peaks of the mountains. The Silberhorn is a spur of the Jungfrau, in the Alps. 15. **firths of ice,** glaciers. 16. **furrow-cloven,** split by crevasses. 17. **dusky doors,** the piled-up mass of refuse through which the stream emerges at the foot of the glacier. 25. **azure pillars of the hearth,** columns of blue smoke.

## IN MEMORIAM

### IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.
OBIIT 1833

### Prologue

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him; thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith; we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness; let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not fear.
But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me,
What seemed my worth since I began;
For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.

---

*In Memoriam.* See Critical Notes.

*Prologue.* 5. **orbs of light and shade,** the planets, partly in the light of the sun and partly in shadow. 17. **systems,** i.e., systems of theology and philosophy. 28. **as before,** before mind and soul had become separated by the modern movement of science and skepticism. 32. **thy light,** the light of knowledge.

I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

(*1849;* 1850)

### 1

Goethe

I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
And find in loss a gain to match?
Or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss.
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with Death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

### 2

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the underlying dead,
Thy fibers net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapped about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

### 3

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is woven across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun;

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands —
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own —
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

### 4

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
"What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darkened eyes;
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

### 5

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies,
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

### 6

One writes that "other friends remain,"
That "loss is common to the race" —

---

*Prologue.* 42. **wasted,** made desolate.

*Section 1.* 1. **him,** Goethe, whom Tennyson ranked highest among modern lyric poets because he was "consummate in so many different styles" (*Memoir,* II, 391).

*Section 5.* 9. **weeds,** garments.

And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more.
Too common! Never morning wore
To evening but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son,
A shot, ere half thy draft be done,
Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor — while thy head is bowed,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought;

Expecting still his advent home;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, "here today,"
Or "here tomorrow will he come."

O somewhere, meek, unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love!

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest;
And thinking "this will please him best,"
She takes a riband or a rose;

For he will see them on tonight;
And with the thought her color burns;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right;

And, even when she turned, the curse
Had fallen, and her future lord
Was drowned in passing through the ford,
Or killed in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

## 7

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more —
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly through the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

## 8

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight:

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet —
The field, the chamber, and the street —
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she fostered up with care;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanished eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or, dying, there at least may die.

## 9

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
Through prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright

*Section 6.* 43. **perpetual maidenhood.** Emily Tennyson later married Captain Jesse, of the Royal Navy.
*Section 7.* 1. **Dark house,** the house in London where Hallam lived while studying law.

*Section 9.* 1. **Fair ship,** etc. Hallam's body was brought to England and buried at Clevedon, on the Severn River. 10. **Phosphor,** Lucifer, the morning star.

As our pure love, through early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

### 10

I hear the noise about thy keel;
I hear the bell struck in the night;
I see the cabin-window bright;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And traveled men from foreign lands;
And letters unto trembling hands;
And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him; we have idle dreams;
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies. O to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God,

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;
And hands so often clasped in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

### 11

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only through the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall —
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

### 12

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear through heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying: "Comes he thus, my friend?
Is this the end of all my care?"
And circle moaning in the air:
"Is this the end? Is this the end?"

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

### 13

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss forever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed;
And, where warm hands have pressed and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too;

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,

---

*Section 10.* 15-16. **where . . . God,** in the church, where the people kneel at the altar for the communion service. People were sometimes buried in English churches near or under the altar. 20. **tangle,** a kind of seaweed.

*Section 11.* 7. **gossamers,** cobwebs seen on grass and low bushes. 11. **lessening,** diminishing by distance. 12. **bounding main,** bordering sea.

*Section 13.* 13. **many years,** in apposition with *Time*.

As though they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

### 14

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touched the land today,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had drooped of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possessed my brain;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

### 15

Tonight the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day;
The last red leaf is whirled away,
The rooks are blown about the skies;

The forest cracked, the waters curled,
The cattle huddled on the lea;
And wildly dashed on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world.

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

### 16

What words are these have fallen from me?
Can calm despair and wild unrest
Be tenants of a single breast,
Or Sorrow such a changeling be?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or storm,
But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink?
And stunned me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan?

### 17

Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze
Compelled thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Through circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week; the days go by;
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars;

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee,
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run.

### 18

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,

---

*Section 15.* Compare this section with Section 11. 10. **thy motions,** the motions of the ship.

*Section 16.* 2. **calm despair and wild unrest,** as expressed in Sections 11 and 15 respectively.

*Section 18.* 2. **Where . . . laid,** in St. Andrew's Church, Clevedon, in the west of England.

And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing through his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

### 19

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along,
And hushed my deepest grief of all,
When filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

### 20

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fullness from the mind.
"It will be hard," they say, "to find
Another service such as this."

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
"How good! how kind! and he is gone."

### 21

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveler hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak:
"This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men."

Another answers: "Let him be;
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy."

A third is wroth: "Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;
Ye never knew the sacred dust.
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged;

*Section 18.* 9. **pure hands.** The bearers at the funeral were farmers on the Clevedon estate. 13-16. This stanza was suggested by the restoring of the Shunammite's son by Elisha, *2 Kings*, 4:32-37.—"And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead and laid upon his bed. And he went up and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm."

*Section 19.* 1. Vienna, where Hallam died, is on the Danube River. Clevedon overlooks the Severn where it flows into the Bristol Channel. The Wye (line 7) joins the Severn a short distance above Clevedon.

*Section 21.* 1-4. Tennyson did not visit Clevedon until after the poem was published, and he probably thought that Hallam was buried in the churchyard. He was buried in the church. 13-16. These lines may refer to the Chartist movement of 1836-48, which demanded radical reforms in social and industrial conditions. The platform was stated in a document called *The People's Charter.* 18-20. These lines may refer to the discovery of Neptune in 1846 and of the eighth satellite of Saturn in 1848. 24. Cf. Goethe's ***Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre***, II, 11: "I sing but as the linnet sings."

And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.

### 22

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Through four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow;

And we with singing cheered the way,
And, crowned with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walked began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow feared of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapped thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, though I walk in haste,
And think that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

### 23

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where it ran
Through lands where not a leaf was dumb,
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan;

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;

And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

### 24

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of day
Is dashed with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never looked to human eyes
Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great?
The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far,
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein?

### 25

I know that this was Life — the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

### 26

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it, for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the moldered tree,
And towers fallen as soon as built —

O if indeed that eye foresee
Or see — in Him is no before —
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

---

*Section 23.* 2. **Or breaking**, etc., a reference to the casual composition of the various sections of the poem at different times and at different places. 12. **Pan**, the god of flocks and shepherds and the symbol of nature. 22. **Argive**, Greek.

*Section 23.* 24. **flute of Arcady**, probably a reference to Greek pastoral poetry.

*Section 24.* 4. **wandering isles of night**, a reference to the spots on the sun.

*Section 25.* 11. **lading**, burden, weight.

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

### 27

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most —
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

### 28

The time draws near the birth of Christ.
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again.

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlled me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

### 29

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas Eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With showered largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

### 30

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possessed the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas Eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gamboled, making vain pretense
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused. The winds were in the beech;
We heard them sweep the winter land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, though every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet.
"They rest," we said, "their sleep is sweet,"
And silence followed, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: "They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change;

"Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gathered power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night;

---

*Section 26.* 16. **my proper scorn,** scorn of myself.

*Section 27.* 15-16. **'Tis better . . . all.** Cf. Thomas Campbell's *The Jilted Nymph*—

"Better be courted and jilted
Than never be courted at all."

*Section 28.* 5. **hamlets round,** hamlets near Somersby, where Tennyson lived. 9. Each church has four bells. It may be that the poet only imagined the sounds. 13. **This year,** 1833. Hallam died in September of that year.

*Section 29.* 13. **Old sisters,** Use and Wont of line 11.

O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

### 31

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded — if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

### 32

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Savior's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

### 33

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
Whose faith has center everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith through form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good;
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

### 34

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

### 35

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,
"The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies, nor is there hope in dust" —

Might I not say, "Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive"?
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
"The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die."

---

*Section 31.* 1-2. **Lazarus, Mary.** Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was raised by Christ from the dead. He had been buried in a cave. See *John*, 11:32-44. 12. **Olivet,** a hill hear Jerusalem. 16. **that Evangelist,** St. John, who alone records the miracle of the raising of Lazarus.

*Section 32.* 11-12. **She bows . . . tears,** a reference to Christ's visit in the home of Lazarus. See *John*, 12:1-3.—"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair."

*Section 33.* This section is a plea for sympathy toward persons who cling to their simple traditional faith.

*Section 34.* 5. **This . . . flame,** the earth and the sun. 14. **charming serpent.** The boom-slang, a South-African snake, has power to attract birds to its mouth.

*Section 35.* 11. **Æonian hills,** hills that have existed for ages.

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crushed the grape,
And basked and battened in the woods.

### 36

Though truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

### 37

Urania speaks with darkened brow:
"Thou pratest here where thou art least;
This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

"Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill."

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
"I am not worthy even to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

"For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

"But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine —
And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said —

"I murmured, as I came along,
Of comfort clasped in truth revealed,
And loitered in the master's field,
And darkened sanctities with song."

### 38

With weary steps I loiter on,
Though always under altered skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits rendered free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

### 39

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow — fixed upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men —
What whispered from her lying lips?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

### 40

Could we forget the widowed hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crowned with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

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*Section 35.* 22. **Satyr-shape,** half man and half beast, like the fabulous race of Satyrs.

*Section 36.* 9. **the Word.** See *John*, 1-4.—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

*Section 37.* 1. **Urania,** the muse of loftiest poetry. 6. **Parnassus,** a mountain in Greece sacred to the muses. 7. **laurel.** Poets were crowned with laurel. 9. **Melpomene,** the muse of tragedy or elegy.

*Section 39.* This section was added in 1869. Cf. Sections 2 and 3.
3. **cloud . . . smoke,** clouds of yellow pollen.

Her office there to rear, to teach,
  Becoming as is meet and fit
  A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
  A life that bears immortal fruit
  In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
  How often shall her old fireside
  Be cheered with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
  And bring her babe, and make her boast,
  Till even those that missed her most
Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,
  Till growing winters lay me low;
  My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.

### 41

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
  Did ever rise from high to higher,
  As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter through the gross.

But thou art turned to something strange,
  And I have lost the links that bound
  Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be —
  That I could wing my will with might
  To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For though my nature rarely yields
  To that vague fear implied in death,
  Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
  An inner trouble I behold,
  A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Though following with an upward mind
  The wonders that have come to thee,
  Through all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

### 42

I vex my heart with fancies dim.
  He still outstripped me in the race;
  It was but unity of place
That made me dream I ranked with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
  And he the much-beloved again,
  A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
  That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
  When one that loves, but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

### 43

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
  And every spirit's folded bloom
  Through all its intervital gloom
In some long trance should slumber on;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
  Bare of the body, might it last,
  And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:

So then were nothing lost to man;
  So that still garden of the souls
  In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began;

And love will last as pure and whole
  As when he loved me here in Time,
  And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

### 44

How fares it with the happy dead?
  For here the man is more and more;
  But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanished, tone and tint,
  And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
  Gives out at times—he knows not whence—
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years —
  If Death so taste Lethean springs —
  May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

*Section 40.* 17. **thee,** Hallam.
*Section 41.* 15-16. These lines probably refer to the miseries of the Inferno, as described by Dante. 23. **to-be,** the age-long future.

*Section 42.* 2. **still,** always.
*Section 43.* 3. **intervital gloom,** the period between death and the Resurrection. 15. **the spiritual prime,** the resurrection morning.
*Section 44.* 2-4. **here . . . head,** the living man increases in stored-up experience as he goes on; but the dead man cannot remember the days of his life on earth. 10. **Lethean.** Lethe was the mythical river of forgetfulness.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
O turn thee round, resolve the doubt;
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

### 45

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I";

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I" and "me,"
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,
As through the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of death.

### 46

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadowed by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it. There no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time revealed,
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

### 47

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet.
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet;

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good.
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing-place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

### 48

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn.

Her care is not to part and prove;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto Love;

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords;

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

### 49

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools.

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-penciled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

### 50

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of being slow.

---

*Section 47.* In this section Tennyson rejects the doctrine that in the next life the individual will be merged into the general soul, and asserts the persistence of individuality.

*Section 48.* 13-16. **Nor . . . away,** a reference to Tennyson's "spasmodic" method of writing the various sections

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

### 51

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue.
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death;
The dead shall look me through and through.

Be near us when we climb or fall;
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

### 52

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the thing beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"
The Spirit of true love replied;
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.

"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears?
What record? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue;

"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
Abide; thy wealth is gathered in,
When Time hath sundered shell from pearl."

### 53

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green;

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live?

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good, define it well;
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

### 54

O yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

### 55

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?

---

*Section 50.* 8. **Fury slinging flame.** The Furies are represented as bearing torches.
*Section 52.* 11. **the sinless years**, the life of Christ.

*Section 53.* 5. **give**, yield, give in.
*Section 55.* 5. **at strife.** Tennyson attempts to reconcile the apparent conflict between science and faith then agitating the public.

So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

### 56

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarpéd cliff and quarried stone
She cries, "A thousand types are gone;
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me.
I bring to life, I bring to death;
The spirit does but mean the breath.
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against his creed —

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

### 57

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song.
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly; let us go.

Come, let us go; your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind.
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever looked with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu," forevermore.

### 58

In those sad words I took farewell.
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answered: "Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

### 59

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be?

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good?

My centered passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from today;
But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,

---

*Section 55.* 7-8. **So careful . . . life.** This doctrine of selection was explained later (1859) by Darwin in his *Origin of Species.* 20. **the larger hope,** i.e., that all humanity will eventually be purified and saved. (See *Memoir,* I, 321.)

*Section 56.* 2-3. **cliff . . . gone.** Geologic formations give evidence that form after form of life has vanished. 22. **Dragons of the prime,** monsters of prehistoric ages. 26. **thy,** Hallam's.

*Section 57.* This section may have been addressed to Tennyson's sister, who was betrothed to Hallam.
15. **Ave, Ave, Ave,** words of farewell to the dead, used by the Romans.

*Section 58.* 9. **The high Muse,** Urania, the muse of loftiest poetry.

*Section 59.* Compare this section with Section 3.

That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

### 60

He passed, a soul of nobler tone;
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by;
At night she weeps, "How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?"

### 61

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransomed reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly charactered and slight,
How dwarfed a growth of cold and night,
How blanched with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

### 62

Though if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

### 63

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

### 64

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mold a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The center of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He played at counselors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who plows with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
"Does my old friend remember me?"

---

*Section 60.* 5. **proper,** own.

*Section 61.* 2. **change replies,** exchange replies. 8. **blanched with darkness,** like plants growing in the dark. 9. **the doubtful shore,** earthly existence. 12. **The soul . . . more.** Shakespeare's writings show that he deeply understood the nature and the power of love.

*Section 62.* 5-7. **declined . . . On,** stooped . . . to.

*Section 63.* 4. **assumptions,** aspirings.

*Section 64.* 10. **the golden keys,** the symbol of high office.

### 65

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With "Love's too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt."

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

### 66

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided through the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

### 67

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west
There comes a glory on the walls;

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,
From off my bed the moonlight dies;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipped in gray;

And then I know the mist is drawn,
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

### 68

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about;
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt;

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

### 69

I dreamed there would be spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost;
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chattered trifles at the door;

I wandered from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs;
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs;
They called me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They called me fool, they called me child.
I found an angel of the night;
The voice was low, the look was bright;
He looked upon my crown and smiled.

He reached the glory of a hand,
That seemed to touch it into leaf;
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

### 70

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint

---

*Section 66.* 1. **diseased,** made uneasy.

*Section 67.* 2. **thy place of rest,** in the church at Clevedon. 3. **broad water of the west,** the Severn, which is nine miles wide at Clevedon.

*Section 69.* 14. **an angel of the night.** Explained by Tennyson as "the divine Thing in the gloom."

The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night:

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palléd shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
And shoals of puckered faces drive;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And through a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

### 71

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long present of the past
In which we went through summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong,
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talked
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walked

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

### 72

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day, when my crowned estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sickened every living bloom,
And blurred the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightest have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, played
A checker-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, marked as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down through time,
And canceled nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthened brows
Through clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarnered sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

### 73

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true?

The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
The head hath missed an earthly wreath;
I curse not Nature, no, nor Death,
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

### 74

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out — to someone of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

---

*Section 70.* 7. **palléd,** wrapped in palls.

*Section 71.* 4. **In . . . France.** Tennyson and Hallam visited France in the summer of 1830.

*Section 72.* 1. **dim dawn,** September 15, the anniversary of Hallam's death. 3. **that . . . white,** that turn up the white underside of the poplar leaves. 5-8. **crowned . . . sun,** a reference to the blighting of the poetic hopes of Tennyson by the adverse criticism of his first important volume of verse, published in 1832. Cf. *Merlin and the Gleam*, st. 3 and note, page 163.

### 75

I leave thy praises unexpressed
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guessed;

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perished in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

### 76

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpened to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten through
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the moldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain;
And what are they when these remain
The ruined shells of hollow towers?

### 77

What hope is here for modern rime
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshortened in the tract of time?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane
A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that? My darkened ways
Shall ring with music all the same;
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

### 78

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
The silent snow possessed the earth;
And calmly fell our Christmas Eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who showed a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No — mixed with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

### 79

"More than my brothers are to me" —
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As molded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curled
Through all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffered vows,
One lesson from one book we learned,

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*Section 76.* 8. **the moldering of a yew.** The yew lives several centuries. 9. **matin songs,** the songs of the great early poets.

*Section 78.* 1. **Christmas,** the second after Hallam's death. Cf. Sections 30 and 105. 5. **yule-clog,** the large log burned on Christmas Eve. 11. **mimic picture,** charades.

*Section 79.* 2. **thee,** addressed to Tennyson's brother Charles. See Section 9, line 20. 4. **in fee,** in absolute possession.

Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turned
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

## 80

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropped the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stayed in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burthen of the weeks,
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

## 81

Could I have said while he was here,
"My love shall now no further range;
There cannot come a mellower change,
For now is love mature in ear"?

Love, then, had hope of richer store;
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
"More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:
"My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain
It might have drawn from after-heat."

## 82

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shattered stalks,
Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth;
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, otherwhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart:
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

## 83

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet new-year delaying long;
Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud
And flood a fresher throat with song.

## 84

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crowned with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
For now the day was drawing on,
When thou shouldst link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

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*Section 82.* 7. **these,** forms of "lower life," line 3.

*Section 83.* 1. **the northern shore,** England. 5. **the clouded noons,** i.e., such as at that season overhung the land. 12. **Laburnums . . . fire.** The laburnum blossoms are of a bright yellow and hang in an inverted position.

*Section 84.* 15. **cypress, orange flower.** The cypress is the symbol of mourning; the orange blossom, the symbol of marriage.

I see myself an honored guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As linked with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content?

85

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrowed most:
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimmed of sorrow, or sustained;
And whether love for him have drained
My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Through light reproaches, half expressed,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touched him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him through the blissful climes,
And showed him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
To wander on a darkened earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindliest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crownéd soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, though left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses decked
With gifts of grace, that might express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect;

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock through all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love; I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;

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*Section 84.* 33. **earthly robe,** body. 37. **What time,** at which time.

*Section 85.* 3-4. Cf. Section 27, lines 15-16. 5. **O true,** etc. Section 85 is addressed to Edmund Law Lushington, Professor of Greek at the University of Glasgow. He married Tennyson's youngest sister, Cecilia, on October 10, 1842. See the Epilogue to *In Memoriam*, page 90.

21. **Intelligences,** angels. 28. **the cycled times,** the successive periods of human progress on earth. 48. **All-subtilizing,** all-refining.

I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had mastered Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears.
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this;

But summer on the steaming floods,
And spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak:
"Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

"I watch thee from the quiet shore;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more."

And I, "Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free?
How is it? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain?"

And lightly does the whisper fall:
" 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead;
Or so methinks the dead would say;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, though widowed, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of spring.

## 86

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Through all the dewy tasseled wood,
And shadowing down the hornéd flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

## 87

I passed beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random through the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazoned on the panes;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last

---

67. **all-assuming,** all-devouring. 85. **nature,** human nature. 86. **the free,** spirits freed from the body. 105. **hold apart,** put aside.

*Section 86.* Tennyson frequently quoted this section to illustrate his "sense of the joyous peace in Nature." Luce regards it as the "very finest" section of the poem.
1. **ambrosial air,** the west wind. 4-5. **breathing . . . space,** clearing the sky of clouds. 7. **hornéd,** winding, indented between points of land.

*Section 87.* 1. **walls,** those of Trinity College, Cambridge.

Up that long walk of limes I passed
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.
I lingered; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crashed the glass and beat the floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo?

### 88

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden through the budded quicks,
O tell me where the senses mix,
O tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate. Fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy;

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
I cannot all command the strings;
The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

### 89

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright;
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town!

He brought an eye for all he saw;
He mixed in all our simple sports;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking through the heat!

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears!

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn!

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discussed the books to love or hate,
Or touched the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For "ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man."
We talked; the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couched in moss,

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*Section 87.* 21-22. **a band Of youthful friends,** known as "The Apostles," and also as "The Water Club" because there was no wine. 40. **bar . . . Angelo.** It is said that Michelangelo (1475-1564), the great Italian artist, had a distinct ridge above the eyes. Hallam once said to Tennyson: "Alfred, look over my eyes; surely I have the bar of Michael-Angelo" (*Memoir*, I, 38 note).

*Section 88.* 1. **Wild bird,** the nightingale. 2. **quicks,** the hawthorn hedges.

*Section 89.* 2. **flat lawn,** at Somersby. Cf. 8, 23, and 38. 12. **purlieus of the law,** the Inner Temple, where Hallam studied law. 24. **The Tuscan poets.** Hallam was an earnest student of Italian. He was especially fond of Dante and Petrarch, who wrote in the Tuscan language. 35-36. **Or touched . . . dream.** They discussed politics and the philosophy of Socrates and of his follower Plato. Hallam was especially fond of Plato.

Or cooled within the glooming wave;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

## 90

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind:

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise.

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine;

But if they came who passed away,
Behold their brides in other hands;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, though their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

## 91

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplished years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat
That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

## 92

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, though it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, though it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And though the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

## 93

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walked when clasped in clay?

No visual shade of someone lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb,
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name,
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

## 94

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,

*Section 89.* 47-48. **Before . . . grave,** before Venus, the evening star, had sunk into the sea, as the sun had already done. According to Laplace, the planets were evolved from the sun.

*Section 91.* 4. **the sea-blue bird,** the kingfisher.

*Section 92.* 2-3. Tennyson here rejects belief in spiritualism as a means of calling up the spirits of the dead. 15-16. The poet here refers to the effect of atmospheric refraction in making objects appear above the horizon when they are actually below it.

*Section 93.* 9. **sightless,** invisible.

Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

### 95

By night we lingered on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering. Not a cricket chirred;
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
From knoll to knoll, where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fallen leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen through wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touched me from the past,
And all at once it seemed at last
The living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirled
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks of Chance—
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was canceled, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-molded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field;

And sucked from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,

"The dawn, the dawn," and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixed their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

### 96

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not. One indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.

*Section 95.* Andrew Lang regards this section as "the crown of *In Memoriam*, expressing almost such things as are not given to men to utter."

8. **the fluttering urn,** the boiling tea-urn. 10. **filmy shapes,** night moths.

*Section 95.* 36-40. In a trance the poet is carried to empyreal heights, where he could see the truth and purpose of God in the universe. Tennyson states that he frequently experienced "a kind of walking trance quite up from boyhood" (*Memoir*, I, 320). 41. **Æonian music,** music or harmony of the ages.

*Section 96.* 1. **You,** some woman of simple faith. 5. **One,** Hallam.

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the specters of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinaï's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

### 97

My Love has talked with rocks and trees;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crowned;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —
I looked on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never passed away;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Though rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrids the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold; she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A withered violet is her bliss;
She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
"I cannot understand; I love."

### 98

You leave us. You will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sailed below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That city. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmarked of me;
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings.
And yet myself have heard him say

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

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*Section 96.* 11-12. **There lives . . . creeds.** Tennyson regards honest doubt as a reverent search for the truth. 21-24. **But . . . loud.** God appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai and gave him the Ten Commandments. The people could not see God, as he was hid in a cloud of fire and smoke, but they saw the lightning and heard the thunder and the loud noise of the trumpet. They disobeyed God's instructions by making and worshiping a golden calf. See *Exodus*, 19:16-25; 32:1-6.

*Section 97.* 1. **My Love,** not a reference to Hallam, but simply a personification of love. 6. **thee,** Hallam. 15. **earnest,** assurance, proof. 21. **thrids,** threads, wanders through.

*Section 98.* 1. **You.** Section 98 is addressed to Tennyson's brother Charles, who planned to visit Vienna on his wedding tour. Tennyson and Hallam made a tour of the Rhine in July, 1832. 8. **Lethe,** the fabulous river of forgetfulness. 21. **mother town,** a literal translation of *metropolis*.

### 99

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest through thy darkling red
On yon swollen brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
Today they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

### 100

I climb the hill. From end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trenched along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right through meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

### 101

Unwatched, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon or when the Lesser Wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake,
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

### 102

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, "Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

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*Section 99.* 1. **dim dawn,** the second anniversary of Hallam's death. Compare Section 72.

*Section 100.* Sections 100, 101, and 102 were suggested by the removal of the Tennysons from Somersby in 1837 to High Beech, in Epping Forest, a few miles north of London.

*Section 101.* 4. **maple burn,** a reference to the red leaves of the maple in the fall. 11. **the Lesser Wain,** the constellation Ursa Minor, commonly called "The Little Dipper." It revolves around the Polar, or North, Star. 13. **gird,** shall girdle or encircle. *Brook* is the subject of *gird, flood,* and *break.* 22. **lops the glades,** trims out the thickets.

*Section 102.* 7. **Two spirits.** "First, the love of the native place; the second, this enhanced by the memory of A. H. H." (Tennyson's note). 10. **matin song,** a reference to Tennyson's first poems, published in 1827.

I turn to go; my feet are set
  To leave the pleasant fields and farms;
  They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

### 103

On that last night before we went
  From out the doors where I was bred,
  I dreamed a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
  And maidens with me; distant hills
  From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
  They sang of what is wise and good
  And graceful. In the center stood
A statue veiled, to which they sang;

And which, though veiled, was known to me,
  The shape of him I loved, and love
  Forever. Then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea;

And when they learnt that I must go,
  They wept and wailed, but led the way
  To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;

And on by many a level mead,
  And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
  We glided winding under ranks
Of iris and the golden reed;

And still as vaster grew the shore
  And rolled the floods in grander space,
  The maidens gathered strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before;

And I myself, who sat apart
  And watched them, waxed in every limb;
  I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart;

As one would sing the death of war,
  And one would chant the history
  Of that great race which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star;

Until the forward-creeping tides
  Began to foam, and we to draw
  From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
  But thrice as large as man he bent
  To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck;

Whereat those maidens with one mind
  Bewailed their lot; I did them wrong:
  "We served thee here," they said, "so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind?"

So rapt I was, they could not win
  An answer from my lips; but he
  Replying, "Enter likewise ye
And go with us," they entered in.

And while the wind began to sweep
  A music out of sheet and shroud,
  We steered her toward a crimson cloud
That landlike slept along the deep.

### 104

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
  The moon is hid, the night is still;
  A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
  That wakens at this hour of rest
  A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
  In lands where not a memory strays,
  Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallowed ground.

### 105

Tonight ungathered let us leave
  This laurel, let this holly stand;
  We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas Eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
  And silent under other snows;
  There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
  The genial hour with mask and mime;
  For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

---

*Section 103.* This section is an allegory. The maidens of line 6 are explained by Tennyson as "the Muses, poetry, arts—all that make life beautiful here, which we hope will pass with us beyond the grave." He also said that the maidens are "all the human powers and talents that do not pass with life but go along with it." The hidden summits (line 7) are the divine source; the river (line 8) is life; the sea (line 16) is eternity.

31. **Anakim.** See *Numbers*, 13:33.—"And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." 32. **Titan's.** The Titans were fabulous giants of Greek mythology.

*Section 104.* 1. **The time, etc.,** the Christmas of 1837. Compare Sections 28, 30, and 78. 3. **church,** Waltham Abbey Church, near the new home of the Tennysons.

*Section 105.* 7. **blows,** blooms.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm;
For who would keep an ancient form
Through which the spirit breathes no more?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast;
Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid East

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

### 106

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light;
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rimes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

### 107

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpened eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together, in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

### 108

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind;

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, though with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies;

---

*Section 105.* 18. **wassail . . . warm,** wine become frothy. 25. **rising worlds,** the rising stars. 28. **closing cycle,** the great final period when everything will be perfect.

*Section 106.* 28. **the thousand years of peace.** Mentioned several times in *Revelation*, 20.

*Section 106.* 32. **the Christ that is to be,** a reference, as Tennyson said, to a time "when Christianity without bigotry will triumph, when the controversies of creeds shall have vanished" (*Memoir*, I, 326).

*Section 107.* 1. **day,** February 1. 12. **iron horns,** twigs covered with ice. 13. **drifts,** variously defined as drifts of snow, clouds, winds, drift-winds, and vapor.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

### 109

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry;
The critic clearness of an eye
That saw through all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man;
Impassioned logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touched with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Through all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face —

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have looked on; if they looked in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

### 110

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years;
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarmed of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

### 111

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, through all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown —

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons through the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

### 112

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up forever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

---

*Section 109.* Tennyson here enumerates Hallam's qualities of heart and mind.
16. **The . . . Celt.** Tennyson did not admire the revolutionary spirit in France; he was a conservative. Cf. Section 127, 7.
*Section 110.* 2. **rathe,** early. 7. **serpent,** deceiver.

*Section 111.* 3. **golden ball.** The crown and the scepter of a king are each decorated with a ball of gold. 18. **villain,** low-bred, ignoble, churlish. 19. **Drew in,** narrowed, contracted.
*Section 112.* 1-4. A wise friend takes the poet to task for being indifferent to great men who have defects and for making small account of lesser men who are perfect in their small way. Both groups fall far short of Hallam. 8. **the lesser lords of doom,** "those that have free will but less intellect" (Tennyson's note).

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuations swayed
In vassal tides that followed thought.

### 113

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfill —
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

### 114

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain, and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

### 115

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood, that live their lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too, and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

### 116

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry through the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone,
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead,

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*Section 114.* 12. **Pallas.** In Greek mythology Pallas Athena (Minerva), the goddess of wisdom, sprang full-armed from the brain of Zeus.

*Section 114.* 21-22. **For she . . . soul.** Cf. *Locksley Hall*, 141, page 48, and *The Ancient Sage*, 37 ff.

*Section 115.* Compare this section with Sections 38, 83, and 91.

2. **burgeons,** buds, sprouts. **maze of quick,** intricate rows of hawthorn hedge. 3. **squares,** fields. 4. **ashen roots,** roots of ash trees. 4. **blow,** bloom.

*Section 116.* 4. **crescent prime,** growing springtime.

Less yearning for the friendship fled
Than some strong bond which is to be.

### 117

O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothéd wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

### 118

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crowned with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

### 119

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland,
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

### 120

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things.

### 121

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosened from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard

*Section 117.* 9-12. This stanza mentions four ways of measuring time: by the hourglass (9); by the sundial (10); by the clock (11); and by the movements of the heavenly bodies (12).

*Section 118.* 3-4. **Nor dream . . . lime,** do not believe that a mere physical interpretation of love is possible. 9. **fluent heat,** a reference to the nebular hypothesis of the origin of the solar system as set forth by Laplace in the early 19th century. 26. **Faun,** a mythical creature, half man and half goat, here representing the grosser nature of man.

*Section 118.* 27-28. **Move . . . die.** Although Tennyson believed that man evolved from lower forms, he may here refer only to man's baser passions.

*Section 119.* 1. **Doors,** etc. Tennyson again visits the London house of Hallam. See Section 7. 4. **the meadow,** loads of new hay.

*Section 120.* 3. **Magnetic mockeries,** i.e., automatic machines controlled by electric force. 4. **Like Paul,** etc. From *1 Corinthians,* 15:32.—"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?" 6-8. Tennyson protests against materialism, not evolution. If science should establish the doctrine of materialism, he would not care to live.

*Section 121.* Stopford Brooke calls this section "the most finished piece of conscious art in *In Memoriam.*"

1. **Hesper** is the Greek name for Venus as the evening star, **Phosphor** (line 9), for Venus as the morning star.

Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

### 122

O wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearned to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quickened with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dewdrop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

### 123

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true;
For though my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

### 124

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest doubt;
He, They, One, All; within, without;
The Power in darkness whom we guess —

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
Nor through the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, "believe no more,"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered, "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach through nature, molding men.

### 125

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, though there often seemed to live
A contradiction on the tongue

Yet Hope had never lost her youth;
She did but look through dimmer eyes;
Or Love but played with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fixed in truth.

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and strong
He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

### 126

Love is and was my lord and king,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

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*Section 121.* 11. **the wakeful bird,** the cock. 17-19. **Sweet . . . past.** His past is like Hesper, his present like Phosphor. (See note on line 1 of this Section.)

*Section 122.* 18. **paints a bow,** reveals the colors of the rainbow.

*Section 124.* 9-12. This stanza refers to the materialistic philosophy condemned in Section 120. 16. **"I have felt."** Tennyson believed that the deepest revelation of God comes not through science or through reason, but through the heart.

Love is and was my king and lord,
And will be, though as yet I keep
Within the court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

### 127

And all is well, though faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, even though thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags!
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compassed by the fires of hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

### 128

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And thronéd races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and Fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new —
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

### 129

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal,
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, forever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeplier, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

### 130

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But though I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Though mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee though I die.

### 131

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,

---

*Section 127.* 6-8. **thrice . . . dead,** probably a reference to the three revolutions in France—1789, 1830, and 1848. 16. **Æon,** the whole duration of the world or of the universe. *Section 128.* 7. **degrade,** degenerate.

*Section 131.* 1. **living will,** explained by Tennyson as "free-will, the higher and enduring part of man." 3. **the spiritual rock.** See *1 Corinthians,* 10:4.—"And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

  A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
  The truths that never can be proved
  Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

### Epilogue

O true and tried, so well and long,
  Demand not thou a marriage lay;
  In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
  Since first he told me that he loved
  A daughter of our house, nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Though I since then have numbered o'er
  Some thrice three years; they went and came,
  Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
  In dying songs a dead regret,
  But like a statue solid-set,
And molded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
  Than in the summers that are flown,
  For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
  As echoes out of weaker times,
  As half but idle brawling rimes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
  That must be made a wife ere noon?
  She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes
  And then on thee; they meet thy look
  And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

Oh, when her life was yet in bud,
  He too foretold the perfect rose.
  For thee she grew, for thee she grows
Forever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;
  As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
  Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out. The noon is near,
  And I must give away the bride;
  She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
  That watched her on her nurse's arm,
  That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
  Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
  Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
  The "Wilt thou?" answered, and again
  The "Wilt thou?" asked, till out of twain
Her sweet "I will" has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
  Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
  By village eyes as yet unborn.
The names are signed, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
  The joy to every wandering breeze;
  The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
  Await them. Many a merry face
  Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
  With him to whom her hand I gave.
  They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has today its sunny side.

Today the grave is bright for me,
  For them the light of life increased,
  Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest tonight beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
  To meet and greet a whiter sun;

---

*Section 131.* 7. **the conquered years**, the victor Hours of Section 1, line 13, overcome by Love and Immortality.

*Epilogue.* The Epilogue celebrates the marriage of Edmund Law Lushington and Cecilia Tennyson, the poet's youngest sister, October 10, 1842. See Critical Notes.

2. **Demand . . . lay.** Since Tennyson could not write the marriage ode for his sister Emily and Hallam, he has not the heart to write an ode for others. 8. **that dark day**, the day of Hallam's death. 31-32. **the star . . . Paradise.** From Catullus, *Ode* 64, 206. The stars shook when Jupiter nodded approval of the marriage of the sea nymph Thetis to the river-god Peleus.

39-40. **that weight Of learning.** Lushington was a noted professor of Greek at Glasgow. 50. **on the dead**, on the slabs covering the graves beneath the chancel floor of the church. 57. **sign your names**, i.e., in the parish register, as was the custom.

My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warmed and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, though in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favored horses wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she looked, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance; — till I retire.
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire.

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver through the hills;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved through life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit;

Whereof the man that with me trod
This planet was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

(1850)

## THE EAGLE

### FRAGMENT

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

(1851)

## COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD

Come not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou wouldst not save.
There let the wind sweep and the plover cry;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy crime
I care no longer, being all unblest:
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick of time,
And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me where I lie;
Go by, go by.

(1851)

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86. **a stiller guest,** the spirit of Hallam. 108. **a rising fire,** the glow from the moon. 115. **friths,** narrow arms of the sea. 121. **sounds,** used here as a verb.

## ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

### 1

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation;
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a mighty nation;
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

### 2

Where shall we lay the man whom we deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought for,
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

### 3

Lead out the pageant; sad and slow,
As fits an universal woe,
Let the long, long procession go,
And let the sorrowing crowd about it grow,
And let the mournful martial music blow;
The last great Englishman is low.

### 4

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
Remembering all his greatness in the past.
No more in soldier fashion will he greet
With lifted hand the gazer in the street.
O friends, our chief state-oracle is mute!
Mourn for the man of long-enduring blood,
The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Whole in himself, a common good.
Mourn for the man of amplest influence,
Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
Our greatest yet with least pretense,
Great in council and great in war,
Foremost captain of his time,
Rich in saving common-sense,
And, as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity sublime.
O good gray head which all men knew,
O voice from which their omens all men drew,
O iron nerve to true occasion true,
O fallen at length that tower of strength
Which stood four-square to all the winds that blew!
Such was he whom we deplore.
The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
The great World-victor's victor will be seen no more.

### 5

All is over and done.
Render thanks to the Giver,
England, for thy son.
Let the bell be tolled.
Render thanks to the Giver,
And render him to the mold.
Under the cross of gold
That shines over city and river,
There he shall rest forever
Among the wise and the bold.
Let the bell be tolled,
And a reverent people behold
The towering car, the sable steeds.
Bright let it be with its blazoned deeds,
Dark in its funeral fold.
Let the bell be tolled,
And a deeper knell in the heart be knolled;
And the sound of the sorrowing anthem rolled
Through the dome of the golden cross;
And the volleying cannon thunder his loss;
He knew their voices of old.
For many a time in many a clime
His captain's-ear has heard them boom
Bellowing victory, bellowing doom.
When he with those deep voices wrought,
Guarding realms and kings from shame,
With those deep voices our dead captain taught
The tyrant, and asserts his claim
In that dread sound to the great name
Which he has worn so pure of blame,
In praise and in dispraise the same,
A man of well-attempered frame.
O civic muse, to such a name,
To such a name for ages long,
To such a name,
Preserve a broad approach of fame,
And ever-echoing avenues of song!

### 6

"Who is he that cometh, like an honored guest,
With banner and with music, with soldier and with priest,
With a nation weeping, and breaking on my rest?" —
Mighty Seaman, this is he

---

*Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington.* Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852), was at the time of his death the hero of the British nation. He had a distinguished record of military victories, the greatest being the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, in 1815. Tennyson had genuine enthusiasm for his subject. The poem is the most important of his official compositions as poet laureate, and is one of the finest funeral odes in literature.

9. **Here . . . roar.** Wellington was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, located in the heart of London.

42. **World-victor's victor**, the conqueror of Napoleon, who had aimed at the conquest of Europe. 49. **the cross of gold**, the cross on St. Paul's Cathedral. 56. **blazoned deeds.** The funeral car was inscribed with the names of Wellington's victories. 66. **Bellowing victory**, a reference to the many victories of Wellington—in Holland, India, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, France, and Belgium. 80-82. These lines are spoken by Lord Nelson, the Mighty Seaman, who lay buried in St. Paul's. He was killed at Trafalgar in 1805.

Was great by land as thou by sea.
Thine island loves thee well, thou famous man,
The greatest sailor since our world began.
Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
To thee the greatest soldier comes;
For this is he
Was great by land as thou by sea.
His foes were thine; he kept us free;
Oh, give him welcome, this is he
Worthy of our gorgeous rites,
And worthy to be laid by thee;
For this is England's greatest son,
He that gained a hundred fights,
Nor ever lost an English gun;
This is he that far away
Against the myriads of Assaye
Clashed with his fiery few and won;
And underneath another sun,
Warring on a later day,
Round affrighted Lisbon drew
The treble works, the vast designs
Of his labored rampart-lines,
Where he greatly stood at bay,
Whence he issued forth anew,
And ever great and greater grew,
Beating from the wasted vines
Back to France her banded swarms,
Back to France with countless blows,
Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
Followed up in valley and glen
With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
And England pouring on her foes.
Such a war had such a close.
Again their ravening eagle rose
In anger, wheeled on Europe-shadowing wings,
And barking for the thrones of kings;
Till one that sought but Duty's iron crown
On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler down;
A day of onsets of despair!
Dashed on every rocky square,
Their surging charges foamed themselves away;
Last, the Prussian trumpet blew;
Through the long-tormented air
Heaven flashed a sudden jubilant ray,
And down we swept and charged and overthrew.
So great a soldier taught us there
What long-enduring hearts could do
In that world-earthquake, Waterloo!
Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
And pure as he from taint of craven guile,
O savior of the silver-coasted isle,
O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
If aught of things that here befall
Touch a spirit among things divine,
If love of country move thee there at all,
Be glad, because his bones are laid by thine!
And through the centuries let a people's voice
In full acclaim,
A people's voice,
The proof and echo of all human fame,
A people's voice, when they rejoice
At civic revel and pomp and game,
Attest their great commander's claim
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

### 7

A people's voice! we are a people yet.
Though all men else their nobler dreams forget,
Confused by brainless mobs and lawless Powers,
Thank Him who isled us here, and roughly set
His Briton in blown seas and storming showers,
We have a voice with which to pay the debt
Of boundless love and reverence and regret
To those great men who fought, and kept it ours.
And keep it ours, O God, from brute control!
O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye, the soul
Of Europe, keep our noble England whole,
And save the one true seed of freedom sown
Betwixt a people and their ancient throne,
That sober freedom out of which there springs
Our loyal passion for our temperate kings!
For, saving that, ye help to save mankind
Till public wrong be crumbled into dust,
And drill the raw world for the march of mind,
Till crowds at length be sane and crowns be just.
But wink no more in slothful overtrust.
Remember him who led your hosts;
He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
Your cannons molder on the seaward wall;
His voice is silent in your council-hall
Forever; and whatever tempests lour

---

99. **Assaye**, a small town in British India, where the Duke (then General Wellesley) won his first great victory, in 1803; he defeated an army of more than 40,000 with a force of less than 5000. 103. **Round**, etc. In 1809-10 Wellington constructed the lines of defense around Lisbon, Portugal, against the French. In 1813 he drove the French across the Pyrenees Mountains into France. 123. **Sabbath.** The Battle of Waterloo was fought on Sunday, June 18, 1815. 129. **Heaven . . . ray.** The records state that the sun broke through the clouds just as the British and the German forces responded to the Duke's command to advance.

136. **the silver-coasted isle**, England. 137. **the Baltic and the Nile**, victorious battles fought by Nelson against Napoleon—the Baltic in 1801, the Nile in 1798. In the Battle of the Baltic, Nelson crushed the naval power of Denmark, one of Napoleon's northern allies, in four hours. Cf. *Buonaparte*, introductory note, page 17. 170. **wink**, shut the eye, be blind. 172. **He . . . coasts.** In 1844-45 Wellington insisted upon the repair of coast defenses and upon an increase of naval and military equipment.

Forever silent; even if they broke
In thunder, silent; yet remember all
He spoke among you, and the Man who spoke;
Who never sold the truth to serve the hour,
Nor paltered with Eternal God for power;
Who let the turbid streams of rumor flow
Through either babbling world of high and low;
Whose life was work, whose language rife
With rugged maxims hewn from life;
Who never spoke against a foe;
Whose eighty winters freeze with one rebuke
All great self-seekers trampling on the right.
Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
Truth-lover was our English Duke;
Whatever record leap to light
He never shall be shamed.

8

Lo! the leader in these glorious wars
Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
Followed by the brave of other lands,
He, on whom from both her open hands
Lavish Honor showered all her stars,
And affluent Fortune emptied all her horn.
Yea, let all good things await
Him who cares not to be great
But as he saves or serves the state.
Not once or twice in our rough island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He that walks it, only thirsting
For the right, and learns to deaden
Love of self, before his journey closes,
He shall find the stubborn thistle bursting
Into glossy purples, which outredden
All voluptuous garden-roses.
Not once or twice in our fair island-story
The path of duty was the way to glory.
He, that ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands,
Through the long gorge to the far light has won
His path upward, and prevailed,
Shall find the toppling crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table-lands
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.
Such was he; his work is done.
But while the races of mankind endure
Let his great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure;
Till in all lands and through all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory:
And let the land whose hearths he saved from shame
For many and many an age proclaim
At civic revel and pomp and game,
And when the long-illumined cities flame,
Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
With honor, honor, honor, honor to him,
Eternal honor to his name.

9

Peace, his triumph will be sung
By some yet unmolded tongue
Far on in summers that we shall not see.
Peace, it is a day of pain
For one about whose patriarchal knee
Late the little children clung.
O peace, it is a day of pain
For one upon whose hand and heart and brain
Once the weight and fate of Europe hung.
Ours the pain, be his the gain!
More than is of man's degree
Must be with us, watching here
At this, our great solemnity.
Whom we see not we revere;
We revere, and we refrain
From talk of battles loud and vain,
And brawling memories all too free
For such a wise humility
As befits a solemn fane.
We revere, and while we hear
The tides of Music's golden sea
Setting toward eternity,
Uplifted high in heart and hope are we,
Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.
For though the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore
Make and break, and work their will,
Though world on world in myriad myriads roll
Round us, each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul?
On God and Godlike men we build our trust.
Hush, the Dead March wails in the people's ears;
The dark crowd moves, and there are sobs and tears;
The black earth yawns; the mortal disappears;
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
He is gone who seemed so great.—
Gone, but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him

---

186. **eighty winters.** Wellington lived to be 83 years old. 188. **Truth-teller,** a name given to King Alfred the Great in the old annals. 194. **Followed . . . lands.** Military representatives of all the powers of Europe, except Austria, were present at the funeral. 196. **Lavish Honor,** etc. Besides being baron, viscount, earl, marquis, and duke, Wellington was a knight of twenty-six orders and a marshal of eight nations.

252. **Music,** the music at the funeral service. 267. **the Dead March,** from Handel's oratorio *Saul.*

Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave him.
Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him,
God accept him, Christ receive him!
(*1852*; 1852)

## THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
"Forward the Light Brigade!
Charge for the guns!" he said.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

"Forward, the Light Brigade!"
Was there a man dismayed?
Not though the soldier knew
Someone had blundered.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabers bare,
Flashed as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right through the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reeled from the saber-stroke
Shattered and sundered.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!
(*1854*; 1854)

## THE SONG OF THE BROOK

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,

---

*The Charge of the Light Brigade.* The charge here described took place in 1854 at Balaklava, on the Black Sea, in the Crimean War, fought against Russia by England, France, Turkey, and Sardinia. It is not known who was responsible for the useless sacrifice.

*The Song of the Brook.* This lyric appears in a narrative poem, an English idyll entitled *The Brook.* In the longer poem, Lawrence Aylmer, returning home after an absence of twenty years, wanders by the brook and recalls the past and the rime of the brook written by his brother Edmund. No particular brook is meant.

9. **Philip.** Philip is a character in the idyll.

And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery water-break
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars,
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on forever.

(1855)

## MAUD

### PART ONE

### I

1

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood;
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribbed ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is asked her, answers "Death."

2

For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
His who had given me life — O father! O God! was it well? —
Mangled, and flattened, and crushed, and dinted into the ground;
There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell.

3

Did he fling himself down? who knows? for a vast speculation had failed,
And ever he muttered and maddened, and ever wanned with despair,
And out he walked when the wind like a broken worldling wailed,
And the flying gold of the ruined woodlands drove through the air.

4

I remembered the time, for the roots of my hair were stirred
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trailed, by a whispered fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night.

5

Villainy somewhere! whose? One says, we are villains all.
Not he; his honest fame should at least by me be maintained;
But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall,
Dropped off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drained.

6

Why do they prate of the blessings of peace? we have made them a curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?

7

But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman's ware or his word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

---

31. **water-break**, ripple. 38. **covers**, thickets. 47. **shingly bars**, banks of loose, coarse gravel.

*Maud.* The speaker of this poem is a morbid, sentimental young man in love with Maud, the rich playmate of his youth. Each section is a stage in the hero's development. After a tragic love affair, the hero goes insane, but he is finally restored under the influence of the noble emotions aroused by the Crimean War. (See Critical Notes.)

8

Sooner or later I too may passively take the print
Of the golden age — why not? I have neither hope nor trust;
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated, and die — who knows? we are ashes and dust.

9

Peace sitting under her olive, and slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hoveled and hustled together, each sex, like swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a company forges the wine.

10

And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life,

11

And Sleep must lie down armed, for the villainous center-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
To pestle a poisoned poison behind his crimson lights.

12

When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones!

13

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home. —

14

What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood?
Must *I* too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die
Rather than hold by the law that I made, nevermore to brood
On a horror of shattered limbs and a wretched swindler's lie?

15

Would there be sorrow for *me?* there was *love* in the passionate shriek,
Love for the silent thing that had made false haste to the grave —
Wrapped in a cloak, as I saw him, and thought he would rise and speak
And rave at the lie and the liar, ah God, as he used to rave.

16

I am sick of the Hall and the hill, I am sick of the moor and the main.
Why should I stay? can a sweeter chance ever come to me here?
Oh, having the nerves of motion as well as the nerves of pain,
Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?

17

Workmen up at the Hall! — they are coming back from abroad;
The dark old place will be gilt by the touch of a millionaire.
I have heard, I know not whence, of the singular beauty of Maud;
I played with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.

18

Maud, with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes,
Maud, the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,
Maud, with her sweet purse-mouth when my father dangled the grapes,
Maud, the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all —

19

What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.

---

41. **center-bit,** an instrument used for drilling holes; it is a common tool of burglars. 45. **Mammonite,** one devoted to the pursuit of wealth. Mammon is the god of wealth. 46. This line refers to the alleged brutalities of Timour, or Tamerlane, the great Mongolian conqueror of the 14th century. At the capture of Siwas he is said to have had a thousand children crushed under the feet of his horsemen.

No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
Thanks; for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own.

## II

Long have I sighed for a calm; God grant I may find it at last!
It will never be broken by Maud; she has neither savor nor salt,
But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage passed,
Perfectly beautiful; let it be granted her; where is the fault?
All that I saw — for her eyes were downcast, not to be seen —
Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been
For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,
Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,
Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in a sensitive nose,
From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen.

## III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you so cruelly meek,
Breaking a slumber in which all spleenful folly was drowned?
Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the cheek,
Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom profound;
Womanlike, taking revenge too deep for a transient wrong
Done but in thought to your beauty, and ever as pale as before
Growing and fading and growing upon me without a sound,
Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it no more,
But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a maddened beach dragged down by the wave,
Walked in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his grave.

## IV

### 1

A million emeralds break from the ruby-budded lime
In the little grove where I sit — ah, wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the breeze of a softer clime,
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage ring of the land?

### 2

Below me, there, is the village, and looks how quiet and small!
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with gossip, scandal, and spite;
And Jack on his ale-house bench has as many lies as a Czar;
And here on the landward side, by a red rock, glimmers the Hall;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!

### 3

When have I bowed to her father, the wrinkled head of the race?
I met her today with her brother, but not to her brother I bowed;
I bowed to his lady-sister as she rode by on the moor,
But the fire of a foolish pride flashed over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;
Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor.

### 4

I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way.
For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;

---

101. **Orion**, a large constellation in the shape of a man.

The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow speared by the shrike,
And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

### 5

We are puppets, Man in his pride, and Beauty fair in her flower;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each other here for an hour;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle, and grin at a brother's shame;
However we brave it out, we men are a little breed.

### 6

A monstrous eft was of old the lord and master of earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man;
He now is first, but is he the last? is he not too base?

### 7

The man of science himself is fonder of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practiced in nature, a spirit bounded and poor;
The passionate heart of the poet is whirled into folly and vice.
I would not marvel at either, but keep a temperate brain;
For not to desire or admire, if a man could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan of old in a garden of spice.

### 8

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil.
Who knows the ways of the world, how God will bring them about?
Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide.
Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
*I* have not made the world, and He that made it will guide.

### 9

Be mine a philosopher's life in the quiet woodland ways,
Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot,
Far-off from the clamor of liars belied in the hubbub of lies;
From the long-necked geese of the world that are ever hissing dispraise
Because their natures are little, and, whether he heed it or not,
Where each man walks with his head in a cloud of poisonous flies.

### 10

And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love,
The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
Ah, Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life.

## V

### 1

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet's call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

### 2

Maud with her exquisite face,
And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky,
And feet like sunny gems on an English green,
Maud in the light of her youth and her grace,
Singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die,
Till I well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,
And myself so languid and base.

---

144. **Isis**, an Egyptain goddess of fruitfulness. 147. **Poland . . . fail**, a reference to the final dismemberment of Poland by Russia and Austria in 1846, and to the defeat of the Hungarians in their revolt against Austrian rule in 1849.

162. **A voice**, Maud's.

3

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

## VI

1

Morning arises stormy and pale,
No sun, but a wannish glare
In fold upon fold of hueless cloud;
And the budded peaks of the wood are bowed,
Caught, and cuffed by the gale;
I had fancied it would be fair.

2

Whom but Maud should I meet
Last night, when the sunset burned
On the blossomed gable-ends
At the head of the village street,
Whom but Maud should I meet?
And she touched my hand with a smile so sweet,
She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not returned.

3

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Through the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,
Ready to burst in a colored flame;
Till at last, when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems
But an ashen-gray delight.

4

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet?

5

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seemed,
And her smile were all that I dreamed,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

6

What if, though her eye seemed full
Of a kind intent to me,
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jeweled mass of millinery,
That oiled and curled Assyrian bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, though but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn —
What if he had told her yestermorn
How prettily for his own sweet sake
A face of tenderness might be feigned,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gained?

7

For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride
Is cap and bells for a fool.

8

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have grown
Of a world in which I have hardly mixed,
And a morbid eating lichen fixed
On a heart half-turned to stone.

9

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught
By that you swore to withstand?

---

216. **Cleopatra.** See *A Dream of Fair Women*, lines 127 ff. and note, page 32.

233. **Assyrian bull.** Assyrian antiquities include sculptured bulls with wings and heavy-featured human heads. 243. **hustings**, a platform from which a candidate for Parliament addressed the electors. 251. **cap and bells**, a reference to the medieval fool's bauble, consisting of a representation of a fool's head with cap and bells.

For what was it else within me wrought
But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,
That made my tongue so stammer and trip
When I saw the treasured splendor, her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

### 10

I have played with her when a child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah, well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seemed,
And her smile had all that I dreamed,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

## VII

### 1

Did I hear it half in a doze
  Long since, I know not where?
Did I dream it an hour ago,
  When asleep in this arm-chair?

### 2

Men were drinking together,
  Drinking and talking of me:
"Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
  Will have plenty; so let it be."

### 3

Is it an echo of something
  Read with a boy's delight,
Viziers nodding together
  In some Arabian night?

### 4

Strange, that I hear two men,
  Somewhere, talking of me:
"Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
  Will have plenty; so let it be."

## VIII

She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone;
An angel watching an urn
Wept over her, carved in stone;
And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blushed
To find they were met by my own;
And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger
And thicker, until I heard no longer
The snowy-banded, dilettante,
Delicate-handed priest intone;
And thought, is it pride? and mused and sighed,
"No surely, now it cannot be pride."

## IX

I was walking a mile,
More than a mile from the shore,
The sun looked out with a smile
Betwixt the cloud and the moor;
And riding at set of day
Over the dark moor land,
Rapidly riding far away,
She waved to me with her hand.
There were two at her side,
Something flashed in the sun,
Down by the hill I saw them ride,
In a moment they were gone;
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light.

## X

### 1

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head?
Whose old grandfather has lately died,
Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
And laying his trams in a poisoned gloom
Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine
Master of half a servile shire,
And left his coal all turned into gold
To a grandson, first of his noble line,
Rich in the grace all women desire,
Strong in the power that all men adore,
And simper and set their voices lower,
And soften as if to a girl, and hold
Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
New as his title, built last year,
There amid perky larches and pine,
And over the sullen-purple moor —
Look at it — pricking a cockney ear.

### 2

What, has he found my jewel out?
For one of the two that rode at her side
Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he;
Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.
Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —

---

295. **Viziers**, high officials of various Mohammedan countries.

Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
At war with myself and a wretched race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

3

Last week came one to the county town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot kings,
Though the state has done it and thrice as well.
This broad-brimmed hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is crammed with his cotton, and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence,
This huckster put down war! can he tell
Whether war be a cause or a consequence?
Put down the passions that make earth hell!
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down! cut off from the mind
The bitter springs of anger and fear!
Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil ear,
For each is at war with mankind!

4

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great wrong,
To take a wanton dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.

5

Ah God, for a man with heart, head, hand,
Like some of the simple great ones gone
Forever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him — what care I? —
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat — one
Who can rule and dare not lie!

6

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

## XI

1

Oh, let the solid ground
  Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
  What some have found so sweet!
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

2

Let the sweet heavens endure,
  Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite, quite sure
  That there is one to love me!
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad —
I shall have had my day.

## XII

1

Birds in the high Hall-garden
  When twilight was falling,
Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
  They were crying and calling.

2

Where was Maud? in our wood;
  And I — who else? — was with her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
  Myriads blow together.

3

Birds in our wood sang
  Ringing through the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
  In among the lilies.

4

I kissed her slender hand,
  She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
  But she is tall and stately.

5

I to cry out on pride
  Who have won her favor!
Oh, Maud were sure of heaven
  If lowliness could save her!

6

I know the way she went
  Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touched the meadows
  And left the daisies rosy.

7

Birds in the high Hall-garden
  Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
  One is come to woo her.

---

370. **This broad-brimmed,** etc., someone who wore the broad-brimmed hat of the Quakers; sometimes taken to refer to John Bright (1811-1889), who was a Quaker and who was prominent in the party opposing the war with Russia at the time this poem was written.

419. **blow,** bloom. 434-435. **For . . . rosy.** The underside of the English daisy is rose-colored. Maud's dress brushed the daisies and bent them over so that the underside was visible.

8

Look, a horse at the door,
And little King Charley snarling!
Go back, my lord, across the moor,
You are not her darling.

### XIII

I

Scorned, to be scorned by one that I scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.
Fool that I am to be vexed with his pride!
I passed him, I was crossing his lands;
He stood on the path a little aside;
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands;
But his essences turned the live air sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunned itself on his breast and his hands.

2

Who shall call me ungentle, unfair?
I longed so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship;
But while I passed he was humming an air,
Stopped, and then with a riding-whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

3

Why sits he here in his father's chair?
That old man never comes to his place;
Shall I believe him ashamed to be seen?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his face,
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a cheat;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be untrue;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet,
Though I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within,
Maud to him is nothing akin.
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heaped the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

4

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be!
Has not his sister smiled on me?

### XIV

I

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn;
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climbed at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate.
A lion ramps at the top,
He is clasped by a passion-flower.

2

Maud's own little oak-room —
Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company — looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate;
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost, to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh heaven, down to my side,
There were but a step to be made.

3

The fancy flattered my mind,
And again seemed overbold;
Now I thought that she cared for me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

4

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood,
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swelled
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;
But I looked, and round, all round the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn,
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,

---

441. **Charley,** a spaniel. 464. **Gorgonized,** turned to stone (from *Gorgon*, a hideous monster of Greek mythology the sight of which turned the beholder to stone).

492. **bed and bower,** flower bed and arbor. 509. **the seventh heaven.** In ancient times the space around the earth was divided into a series of heavens of varying number. The seventh heaven represents the place or state of supreme bliss.

Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep;
Yet I shuddered and thought like a fool of the sleep of death.

## XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
And I make myself such evil cheer,
That if *I* be dear to someone else,
Then someone else may have much to fear;
But if *I* be dear to someone else,
Then I should be to myself more dear.
Shall I not take care of all that I think,
Yea, even of wretched meat and drink,
If I be dear,
If I be dear to someone else?

## XVI

### 1

This lump of earth has left his estate
The lighter by the loss of his weight;
And so that he find what he went to seek,
And fulsome pleasure clog him, and drown
His heart in the gross mud-honey of town,
He may stay for a year who has gone for a week.
But this is the day when I must speak,
And I see my oread coming down,
Oh, this is the day!
O beautiful creature, what am I
That I dare to look her way?
Think I may hold dominion sweet,
Lord of the pulse that is lord of her breast,
And dream of her beauty with tender dread,
From the delicate Arab arch of her feet
To the grace that, bright and light as the crest
Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
And she knows it not — O if she knew it,
To know her beauty might half undo it!
I know it the one bright thing to save
My yet young life in the wilds of Time,
Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,
Perhaps from a selfish grave.

### 2

What, if she be fastened to this fool lord,
Dare I bid her abide by her word?
Should I love her so well if she
Had given her word to a thing so low?
Shall I love her as well if she
Can break her word were it even for me?
I trust that it is not so.

### 3

Catch not my breath, O clamorous heart,
Let not my tongue be a thrall to my eye,
For I must tell her before we part,
I must tell her, or die.

## XVII

Go not, happy day,
From the shining fields,
Go not, happy day,
Till the maiden yields.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.
When the happy Yes
Falters from her lips,
Pass and blush the news
Over glowing ships;
Over blowing seas,
Over seas at rest,
Pass the happy news,
Blush it through the West;
Till the red man dance
By his red cedar-tree,
And the red man's babe
Leap, beyond the sea.
Blush from West to East,
Blush from East to West,
Till the West is East,
Blush it through the West.
Rosy is the West,
Rosy is the South,
Roses are her cheeks,
And a rose her mouth.

## XVIII

### 1

I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
There is none like her, none.
And never yet so warmly ran my blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wished-for end,
Full to the banks, close on the promised good.

### 2

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pattering talk
Seemed her light foot along the garden walk,
And shook my heart to think she comes once more.

---

544. **oread,** a mountain nymph. 551. **Arab arch,** a reference to the high instep of the Arab, which gives swiftness and elasticity to his gait.

*Section XVII.* This section is commonly regarded as a notable example of "the flowing richness of Tennyson's rhythm." When Tennyson read the section aloud, his voice often broke down with the sheer intensity of joy that approaches sadness.

But even then I heard her close the door;
The gates of heaven are closed, and she is gone.

3

There is none like her, none,
Nor will be when our summers have deceased.
Oh, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, though thy limbs have here increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South and fed
With honeyed rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head
Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-flame;
And over whom thy darkness must have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy great
Forefathers of the thornless garden, there
Shadowing the snow-limbed Eve from whom she came?

4

Here will I lie, while these long branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn
As when it seemed far better to be born
To labor and the mattock-hardened hand
Than nursed at ease and brought to understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

5

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl?—

6

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

7

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,
And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs.
Oh, why should Love, like men in drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer this?
"The dusky strand of Death inwoven here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear."

8

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?
And hark the clock within, the silver knell
Of twelve sweet hours that passed in bridal white,
And died, to live, long as my pulses play;
But now by this my love has closed her sight
And given false death her hand, and stolen away
To dreamful wastes where footless fancies dwell
Among the fragments of the golden day.
May nothing there her maiden grace affright!
Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy spell.
My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
It is but for a little space I go.
And ye meanwhile far over moor and fell
Beat to the noiseless music of the night!
Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
*I* have climbed nearer out of lonely hell.
Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,
Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
That seems to draw — but it shall not be so;
Let all be well, be well.

## XIX

### I

Her brother is coming back tonight,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

---

616. **Dark cedar.** There was a famous cedar of Lebanon in the grounds of Farringford, Tennyson's home on the Isle of Wight. Lebanon is a mountain range in Syria. 625. **the thornless garden.** The Garden of Eden was thornless until the sin of Adam. Cf. *Genesis*, 3:18.—"Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." 634. **A sad astrology.** The old astrology taught that the destinies of men were controlled by the movement of the stars; modern science teaches that the stars have no such power.

649. **livelier . . . grass.** Cf. *Locksley Hall*, 19-20, p. 45. 651. **Not . . . breath.** "This is the central idea, the holy power of Love" (Tennyson's note). 666. **false death**, sleep.

2

My dream? do I dream of bliss?
I have walked awake with Truth.
Oh, when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this
For my dark-dawning youth,
Darkened watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and mine;
For who was left to watch her but I?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

3

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk —
For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless things —
But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin.
I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek
When it slowly grew so thin
That I felt she was slowly dying
Vexed with lawyers and harassed with debt;
For how often I caught her with eyes all wet,
Shaking her head at her son and sighing
A world of trouble within!

4

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved
As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart
From him who had ceased to share her heart,
And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with blood
By which our houses are torn.
How strange was what she said,
When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed —
That Maud's dark father and mine
Had bound us one to the other,
Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born;
Sealed her mine from her first sweet breath!
Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death!
Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn!

5

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncanceled, had been so sweet;
And none of us thought of a something beyond,
A desire that awoke in the heart of the child,
As it were a duty done to the tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be reconciled;
And I was cursing them and my doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run wild
While often abroad in the fragrant gloom
Of foreign churches — I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

6

But then what a flint is he!
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touched on me
This brother had laughed her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darkened into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years before;
And this was what had reddened her cheek
When I bowed to her on the moor.

7

Yet Maud, although not blind
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and day,
And tended her like a nurse.

8

Kind? but the death-bed desire
Spurned by this heir of the liar —
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why, let it be so,
For shall not Maud have her will?

9

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours,
Oh, then, what then shall I say? —
If ever I *should* forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

10

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate,
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight
That I should grow light-headed, I fear,
Fantastically merry,

---

720-726. See Part One, Section VII, page 101.

But that her brother comes, like a blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall tonight.

## XX

1

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that *I* tried today
To beguile her melancholy;
The Sultan, as we name him —
She did not wish to blame him —
But he vexed her and perplexed her
With his worldly talk and folly.
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses?
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gypsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

2

But tomorrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give
A grand political dinner
To half the squirelings near;
And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

3

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

4

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over;
And then, O then, come out to me
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

## XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me,
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea;
O rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee —
If I read her sweet will right —
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, "Ah, be
Among the roses tonight."

## XXII

1

Come into the garden, Maud,
  For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
  I am here at the gate alone;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
  And the musk of the rose is blown.

2

For a breeze of morning moves,
  And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
  On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
  To faint in his light, and to die.

3

All night have the roses heard
  The flute, violin, bassoon;
All night has the casement jessamine stirred
  To the dancers dancing in tune;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
  And a hush with the setting moon.

4

I said to the lily, "There is but one,
  With whom she has heart to be gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone?
  She is weary of dance and play."
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
  And half to the rising day;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
  The last wheel echoes away.

---

*Section XXII.* Compare this section with "Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal," from *The Princess*, page 56. In that song the flowers sleep in sympathy.
**857. the planet of Love,** Venus.

5

I said to the rose, "The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"Forever and ever, mine."

6

And the soul of the rose went into my blood,
As the music clashed in the hall;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all;

7

From the meadow your walks have left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes,
To the woody hollows in which we meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

8

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree;
The white lake-blossom fell into the lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea;
But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sighed for the dawn and thee.

9

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one;
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

10

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear;
She is coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near";
And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear";
And the lily whispers, "I wait."

11

She is coming, my own, my sweet;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead,
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.

## PART TWO

### I

1

"The fault was mine, the fault was mine" —
Why am I sitting here so stunned and still,
Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill? —
It is this guilty hand! —
And there rises ever a passionate cry
From underneath in the darkening land —
What is it that has been done?
O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
The fires of hell brake out of thy rising sun,
The fires of hell and of hate;
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,
He came with the babe-faced lord,
Heaped on her terms of disgrace;
And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,
He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by;
Struck for himself an evil stroke,
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe.
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
From the red-ribbed hollow behind the wood,
And thundered up into heaven the Christless code
That must have life for a blow.
Ever and ever afresh they seemed to grow.
Was it he lay there with a fading eye?
"The fault was mine," he whispered, "fly!"
Then glided out of the joyous wood
The ghastly Wraith of one that I know,
And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood;
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die, till I die.

2

Is it gone? my pulses beat —
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?
Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,
High over the shadowy land.

---

26. **the Christless code,** the unwritten law, which is invoked in settling "affairs of honor" in a duel. 32. **The ghastly Wraith of one,** the phantom of Maud.

It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,
When they should burst and drown with deluging storms
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,
The little hearts that know not how to forgive.
Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,
Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,
That sting each other here in the dust;
We are not worthy to live.

## II

### 1

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl,
Lying close to my foot,
Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairily well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design!

### 2

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.
Let him name it who can;
The beauty would be the same.

### 3

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurled,
A golden foot or a fairy horn
Through his dim water-world?

### 4

Slight, to be crushed with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand!

### 5

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwrecked man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear —
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving eye,
Flying along the land and the main —
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain?

### 6

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have lost;
An old song vexes my ear,
But that of Lamech is mine.

### 7

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, forever, to part —
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

### 8

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye —
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things
Which else would have been passed by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings —
For he had many, poor worm — and thought,
It is his mother's hair.

### 9

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go by,
But speak to her all things holy and high,

---

49. **shell,** found on the coast of Brittany, after the duel with Maud's brother. "The shell undestroyed amid the storm perhaps symbolizes to him his own first and highest nature preserved amid the storms of passion" (Tennyson's note).

96. **Lamech.** See *Genesis*, 4:23.—"And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, 'Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech; for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.'"

Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the deep,
And comfort her though I die!

### III

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left forever alone;
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone! —
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die.

### IV

#### I

O that 'twere possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

#### 2

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixed with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

#### 3

A shadow flits before me,
Not thou, but like to thee.
Ah, Christ, that it were possible
For one short hour to see
The souls we loved, that they might tell us
What and where they be!

#### 4

It leads me forth at evening,
It lightly winds and steals
In a cold white robe before me,
When all my spirit reels
At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
And the roaring of the wheels.

#### 5

Half the night I waste in sighs,
Half in dreams I sorrow after
The delight of early skies;
In a wakeful doze I sorrow
For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
For the meeting of the morrow,
The delight of happy laughter,
The delight of low replies.

#### 6

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And a dewy splendor falls
On the little flower that clings
To the turrets and the walls;
'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
And the light and shadow fleet,
She is walking in the meadow,
And the woodland echo rings;
In a moment we shall meet.
She is singing in the meadow,
And the rivulet at her feet
Ripples on in light and shadow
To the ballad that she sings.

#### 7

Do I hear her sing as of old,
My bird with the shining head,
My own dove with the tender eye?
But there rings on a sudden a passionate cry,
There is someone dying or dead,
And a sullen thunder is rolled;
For a tumult shakes the city,
And I wake, my dream is fled.
In the shuddering dawn, behold,
Without knowledge, without pity,
By the curtains of my bed
That abiding phantom cold!

#### 8

Get thee hence, nor come again,
Mix not memory with doubt,
Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
Pass and cease to move about!
'Tis the blot upon the brain
That *will* show itself without.

#### 9

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapped in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide.

#### 10

Through the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame;
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Through all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

#### 11

Alas for her that met me,
That heard me softly call,

---

*Section III.* This lyric was added in 1856. It was one of Tennyson's favorite "songs of the deeper kind."
*Section IV.* See Critical Notes.

Came glimmering through the laurels
At the quiet evenfall,
In the garden by the turrets
Of the old manorial hall!

12

Would the happy spirit descend
From the realms of light and song,
In the chamber or the street,
As she looks among the blest,
Should I fear to greet my friend
Or to say, "Forgive the wrong,"
Or to ask her, "Take me, sweet,
To the regions of thy rest"?

13

But the broad light glares and beats,
And the shadow flits and fleets
And will not let me be;
And I loathe the squares and streets,
And the faces that one meets,
Hearts with no love for me.
Always I long to creep
Into some still cavern deep,
There to weep, and weep, and weep
My whole soul out to thee. (*1834;* 1837)

## V

1

Dead, long dead,
Long dead!
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,
Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter;
And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so.
To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?
But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

2

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man;
And though we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read.
It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead;
There is none that does his work, not one.
A touch of their office might have sufficed,
But the churchmen fain would kill their church,
As the churches have killed their Christ.

3

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress;
And another, a lord of all things, praying
To his own great self, as I guess;
And another, a statesman there, betraying
His party-secret, fool, to the press;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient — all for what?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,
And wheedle a world that loves him not,
For it is but a world of the dead.

4

Nothing but idiot gabble!
For the prophecy given of old
And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold;
Not let any man think for the public good,
But babble, merely for babble.
For I never whispered a private affair
Within the hearing of cat or mouse,
No, not to myself in the closet alone,
But I heard it shouted at once from the top of the house;
Everything came to be known.
Who told *him* we were there?

5

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back
From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie;
He has gathered the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to crack —
Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

6

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat;
I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,
But I know that he lies and listens mute

---

280. **the prophecy given of old**, a reference to *Luke*, 12:2-3.—"For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." 296. **the rat**, a reference to the Norwegian rat, which was carried to England in the 18th century. The Jacobites said that this rat had come to England with the House of Hanover in 1714, when George Ludwig, elector of Hanover, succeeded Anne on the English throne; hence it was called the "Hanoverian rat."

In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes.
Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it,
Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls!
It is all used up for that.

7

Tell him now: she is standing here at my head;
Not beautiful now, not even kind;
He may take her now; for she never speaks her mind,
But is ever the one thing silent here.
She is not *of* us, as I divine;
She comes from another stiller world of the dead,
Stiller, not fairer than mine.

8

But I know where a garden grows,
Fairer than aught in the world beside,
All made up of the lily and rose
That blow by night, when the season is good,
To the sound of dancing music and flutes.
It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood;
For the keeper was one, so full of pride,
He linked a dead man there to a spectral bride;
For he, if he had not been a Sultan of brutes,
Would he have that hole in his side?

9

But what will the old man say?
He laid a cruel snare in a pit
To catch a friend of mine one stormy day;
Yet now I could even weep to think of it;
For what will the old man say
When he comes to the second corpse in the pit?

10

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;
But the red life spilt for a private blow —
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely even akin.

11

O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?
Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,
Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?
Maybe still I am but half-dead;
Then I cannot be wholly dumb.
I will cry to the steps above my head
And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come
To bury me, bury me
Deeper, ever so little deeper.

## PART THREE

1

My life has crept so long on a broken wing
Through cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing.
My mood is changed, for it fell at a time of year
When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
And the shining daffodil dies, and the Charioteer
And starry Gemini hang like glorious crowns
Over Orion's grave low down in the west,
That like a silent lightning under the stars
She seemed to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars —
"And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee," and pointed to Mars
As he glowed like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast.

2

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded a dear delight
To have looked, though but in a dream, upon eyes so fair,
That had been in a weary world my one thing bright;
And it was but a dream, yet it lightened my despair
When I thought that a war would arise in defense of the right,
That an iron tyranny now should bend or cease,
The glory of manhood stand on his ancient height,

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326. **the second corpse.** "The second corpse is Maud's brother, the lover's father being the first corpse, whom the lover thinks that Maud's father has murdered" (Tennyson's note). 330. **Whatever the Quaker holds.** The Quakers, or Friends, regard personal combats and public wars as contrary to the spirit of Christ.

*Part Three.* Tennyson states that this part was written just prior to the Crimean War, fought against Russia by England, France, Turkey, and Sardinia, in 1854-56.
6. **the Charioteer**, the constellation Auriga, situated midway between the Polar Star and Orion. 7. **Gemini**, the Twins, two stars in the southern hemisphere, named Castor and Pollux. 8. **Orion**, a large constellation in the shape of a man. 14. **the Lion**, Leo, a northern constellation containing the bright star Regulus.

Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire.
No more shall commerce be all in all, and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a slothful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the wind no more.

3

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
"It is time, it is time, O passionate heart," said I —
For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true —
"It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease should die."
And I stood on a giant deck and mixed my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle-cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death.

4

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told;
And hail once more to the banner of battle unrolled!
Though many a light shall darken, and many shall weep
For those that are crushed in the clash of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreaked on a giant liar,
And many a darkness into the light shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names,
And noble thought be freer under the sun,
And the heart of a people beat with one desire;
For the peace, that I deemed no peace, is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.

5

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind.
It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and the doom assigned.
*(1834-56;* 1837-56)

## IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,
I walked with one I loved two and thirty years ago.
All along the valley, while I walked today,
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away;
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.
*(1861;* 1864)

## A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

Sea-kings' daughter from over the sea,
Alexandra!
Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!
Welcome her, thunders of fort and of fleet!
Welcome her, thundering cheer of the street!
Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,
Scatter the blossom under her feet!
Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!
Make music, O bird, in the new-budded bowers!
Blazon your mottoes of blessing and prayer!

---

36. **the dreary phantom,** probably the false phantom of Maud, the "ghastly Wraith" of Part Two, 32, page 108.

*In the Valley of Cauteretz.* Cauteretz is a beautiful valley in the Pyrenees Mountains, visited by Tennyson and Arthur Hallam in 1830, and again by Tennyson in 1861. See *In Memoriam,* Section 71, page 73.

*A Welcome to Alexandra.* Alexandra was the daughter of Christian IX, of Denmark. She married the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII, at Windsor on March 10, 1863. The poem was written as a welcome to her upon her arrival in England a few days before the wedding.

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is ours!
Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and towers!
Flames, on the windy headland flare!
Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!
Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!
Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!
Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and higher
Melt into stars for the land's desire!
Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,
Roll as a ground-swell dashed on the strand,
Roar as the sea when he welcomes the land,
And welcome her, welcome the land's desire,
The sea-kings' daughter as happy as fair,
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,
Bride of the heir of the kings of the sea —
O joy to the people and joy to the throne,
Come to us, love us and make us your own;
For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra!
(*1863;* 1863)

## MILTON

### (ALCAICS)

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
O skilled to sing of Time or Eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages;
Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset!
Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedar arches
Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
Where some refulgent sunset of India
Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
And crimson-hued the stately palm-woods
Whisper in odorous heights of even.
(*1863;* 1864)

## THE FLOWER

Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Through my garden-bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night;

Sowed it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
"Splendid is the flower."

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed. (1864)

## A DEDICATION

Dear, near and true — no truer Time himself
Can prove you, though he make you evermore
Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of life
Shoots to the fall — take this and pray that he
Who wrote it, honoring your sweet faith in him,
May trust himself; and after praise and scorn,
As one who feels the immeasurable world,
Attain the wise indifference of the wise;
And after autumn past — if left to pass
His autumn into seeming-leafless days —
Draw toward the long frost and longest night,
Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the fruit
Which in our winter woodland looks a flower.
(1864)

## THE VOYAGE

We left behind the painted buoy
That tosses at the harbor-mouth;
And madly danced our hearts with joy,
As fast we fleeted to the south.
How fresh was every sight and sound
On open main or winding shore!
We knew the merry world was round,
And we might sail for evermore.

---

*Milton.* See Critical Notes.

5. **Gabriel, Abdiel.** In *Paradise Lost* Gabriel and Abdiel withstood Satan in his revolt against God. (See Book 5.) They are called Titans after the race of majestic giants of Greek mythology.

*The Flower.* Although Tennyson states (*Memoir*, II, 10) that this poem is "an universal apologue and parable," it fittingly suggests that his own poetry, little cared for at first, gained in popular approval after it found many imitators.

*A Dedication.* This poem is supposed to be addressed to the poet's wife.

*The Voyage.* This poem is an allegory of earnest and noble living. It represents a quest for a lofty ideal—never to be attained, but never to be abandoned. Cf. *Ulysses*, 30-32, page 43; *Locksley Hall*, 181, page 49; and *Merlin and the Gleam*, page 163.

Warm broke the breeze against the brow,
Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail;
The Lady's-head upon the prow
Caught the shrill salt, and sheered the gale.
The broad seas swelled to meet the keel,
And swept behind; so quick the run,
We felt the good ship shake and reel,
We seemed to sail into the sun!

How oft we saw the sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillared light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As through the slumber of the globe
Again we dashed into the dawn!

New stars all night above the brim
Of waters lightened into view;
They climbed as quickly, for the rim
Changed every moment as we flew.
Far ran the naked moon across
The houseless ocean's heaving field,
Or flying shone, the silver boss
Of her own halo's dusky shield.

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
High towns on hills were dimly seen;
We passed long lines of Northern capes
And dewy Northern meadows green.
We came to warmer waves, and deep
Across the boundless East we drove,
Where those long swells of breaker sweep
The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
Gloomed the low coast and quivering brine
With ashy rains, that spreading made
Fantastic plume or sable pine;
By sands and steaming flats, and floods
Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
Glowed for a moment as we passed.

O hundred shores of happy climes,
How swiftly streamed ye by the bark!
At times the whole sea burned, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark;
At times a carven craft would shoot
From havens hid in fairy bowers,
With naked limbs and flowers and fruit,
But we nor paused for fruit nor flowers.

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we followed where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixed upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmured, "O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine."

And now we lost her, now she gleamed
Like Fancy made of golden air,
Now nearer to the prow she seemed
Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge fair,
Now high on waves that idly burst
Like Heavenly Hope she crowned the sea,
And now, the bloodless point reversed,
She bore the blade of Liberty.

And only one among us — him
We pleased not — he was seldom pleased;
He saw not far, his eyes were dim,
But ours he swore were all diseased.
"A ship of fools," he shrieked in spite,
"A ship of fools," he sneered and wept.
And overboard one stormy night
He cast his body, and on we swept.

And never sail of ours was furled,
Nor anchor dropped at eve or morn;
We loved the glories of the world,
But laws of nature were our scorn.
For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and through the counter gale?

Again to colder climes we came,
For still we followed where she led;
Now mate is blind and captain lame,
And half the crew are sick or dead,
But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
We follow that which flies before;
We know the merry world is round,
And we may sail for evermore. (1864)

## NORTHERN FARMER

### OLD STYLE

Wheer 'asta beän saw long and meä liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse; whoy, Doctor's abeän an' agoän;
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor aäle, but I beänt a fool;

*Northern Farmer* (*Old Style*). Tennyson states that this poem is "founded on the dying words of a farm-bailiff as reported to me by a great-uncle of mine when verging upon 80—'God A'mighty little knows what He's about a-taking me. An' Squire will be so mad an' all.' I conjectured the man from that one saying" (*Memoir*, II, 9). The character belongs to Lincolnshire, a northern county of England. A farm-bailiff is an agent of the lord of the manor for collecting rents, managing the farm, etc. R. C. Trench wrote the Bishop of Oxford about the poem. He said: "Every clergyman ought to study it. It is a wonderful revelation of heathenism still in the land."

1. **'asta beän**, hast thou been. **liggin' 'ere aloän**, lying here alone. 2. **Noorse? . . . noorse**, Nurse? thou art of no use as a nurse. **abeän an' agoän**, been and gone. 3. **moänt 'a**, may not have.

Git ma my aäle, fur I beänt a-gawin' to breäk my rule.

Doctors, they knaws nowt, fur a says what's nawways true;
Naw soort o' koind o' use to saäy the things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' aäle ivry noight sin' I beän 'ere.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-noight for foorty year.

Parson's a beän loikewoise, an' a sittin' ere o' my bed.
"The Amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," a said,
An' a towd ma my sins, an' 's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

Larned a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot sa mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy Marris's barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi' Squoire an' choorch an' staäte,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver agin the raäte.

An' I hallus coomed to 's choorch afoor moy Sally wur deäd,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my 'eäd,
An' I niver knawed whot a meäned but I thowt a 'ad summut to saäy,
An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coomed awaäy.

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she laäid it to meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass, tha mun understond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done boy the lond.

duty

But Parson a cooms an' a goäs, an' a says it eäsy an' freeä:
"The Amoighty's a taäkin o' you to 'issén, my friend," says 'eä.
I weänt saäy men be loiars, thaw summun said it in 'aäste;
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an' I 'a stubbed Thurnaby waäste.

reads one sermon

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw, tha was not born then;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysén;
Moäst loike a butter-bump, fur I 'eärd 'um about an' about,
But I stubbed 'um oop wi' the lot, an' raäved an' rembled 'um out.

Keäper's it wur; fo' they fun 'um theer a-laäid of 'is faäce
Down i' the woild 'enemies afoor I coomed to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner 'ed shot 'um as deäd as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'anged for it oop at 'soize — but git ma my aäle.

poison

Dubbut looök at the waäste; theer warn't not feeäd for a cow;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an' looök at it now —
Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now theer 's lots o' feeäd,
Fourscoor yows upon it, an' some on it down i' seeäd.

fern

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meäned to 'a stubbed it at fall,
Done it ta-year I meäned, an' runned plow thruff it an' all,
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän —
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o' Squoire's, an' lond o' my oän.

Do Godamoighty knaw what a's doing, a-taäkin' o' meä?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an' yonder a peä;
An' Squoire 'ull be sa mad an' all — a' dear, a' dear!
And I 'a managed for Squoire coom Michaelmas thutty year.

A mowt 'a taäen owd Joänes, as 'ant not a 'aäpoth o' sense,

---

5. **a,** he. 7. **point,** pint. 10. **you.** *Ou* is pronounced as in *hour*. **'issén,** himself. 11. **towd,** told. **an' 's toithe,** and his tithe. 12. **boy,** by. 13. **Larned a ma' beä,** learned he may be. 14. **a cast oop,** he brought up against me. **barne,** child. 16. **the raäte,** the poor tax. 18. **buzzard-clock,** cockchafer (a kind of buzzing insect). 23. **'Siver, I kep 'um,** however, I supported him. 27. **summun,** someone (David; see *Psalms,* 116:11.—"I said in my haste, 'All men are liars.' ").

28. **'e,** he (the parson). **'a stubbed,** have broken up for cultivation. 30. **boggle,** bogie, ghost. 31. **butter-bump,** bittern (a bird with a loud, hollow note). 32. **raäved an' rembled 'um out,** plowed them up and threw them out. 33. **Keäper's it wur,** it was the ghost of the gamekeeper. **a-laäid of 'is faäce,** lying on his face. 34. **i' the woild 'enemies,** among the wild anemones. 35. **toäner,** one or the other (Noäks or Thimbleby). 36. **at 'soize,** at the assizes (court hearing).

37. **Dubbut,** do but. 38. **bracken an' fuzz,** fern and furze. 40. **yows,** ewes. **i' seeäd,** seeded to clover. 41. **Nobbut,** only. 42. **ta-year,** this year. 46. **wonn as saws,** such a one as sows. 48. **Michaelmas,** a church festival celebrated on September 29. 49. **as . . . sense,** who hasn't a half-penny worth of sense.

Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a niver mended a fence;
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä an' taäke ma now,
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurnaby hoälms to plow!

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they seeäs ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén, naw doubt, "What a man a beä sewer-loy!"
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squoire sin' fust a coomed to the 'All;
I done moy duty by Squoire an' I done moy duty boy hall.

Squoire's i' Lunnon, an' summun I reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä thot muddles ma quoit;
Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver rembles the stoäns.

But summun 'ull come ater meä mayhap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds wi' the divil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I couldn abeär to see it.

What atta stannin' theer fur, an' doesn bring ma the aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, an a's hallus i' the owd taäle;
I weänt breäk rules fur Doctor, a knaws naw moor nor a floy;
Git ma my aäle, I tell tha, an' if I mun doy I mun doy. (1864)

## NORTHERN FARMER
### NEW STYLE

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam, thou's an ass for thy pains;
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braïns.

Woä — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam; yon's parson's 'ouse —
Dosn't thou knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.
Proputty, proputty — woä then, woä — let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou's beän talkin' to muther, an' she beän a-tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's sweet upo' parson's lass —
Noä — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

Seeäed her todaäy goä by — Saäint's-daäy — they was ringing the bells.
She's a beauty, thou thinks — an' soä is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a beauty? — the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' proputty, proputty graws.

stubborn
Do'ant be stunt; taäke time. I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?
But I knawed a Quaäker feller as often 'as towd ma this:
"Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!"

An' I went wheer munny war; an' thy muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laaïd by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty — I niver giv it a thowt —
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?
Ant has nothing
Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt 'a nowt when 'e's deäd,
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut, and addle her breäd.

---

52. **cauve**, calve. 53. **quoloty**, quality; the gentry. 54. **thessén**, themselves. **sewer-loy**, surely. 58. **howd**, hold. 61. **kittle o' steäm**, boiler of steam. (The steam thresher was introduced into Lincolnshire in 1848.) 62. **Huzzin' an' maäzin'**, worrying and frightening. 64. **it**, i.e., the presence of the threshing machine. 65. **atta**, art thou. 66. **'toättler**, teetotaler. **a's . . . taäle**, he is always telling the same story. 67. **floy**, fly.

*Northern Farmer* (*New Style*). In this poem the independent farmer of large holdings has succeeded the farm agent of the earlier poem. The poem grew out of a favorite saying of a rich neighbor of Tennyson—"When I canters my 'erse along the ramper [highway], I 'ears proputty, proputty, proputty" (*Memoirs*, II, 9). The farmer and his son Sam are on horseback. The speech to Sam is frequently broken into by remarks to the horse.

1. **'erse's**, horse's.

2. **Proputty**, property. 5. **craw to pluck**, crow to pick; something disagreeable to take up. 7. **to weeäk**, this week. 14. **scoors o' gells**, scores of girls. 17. **stunt**, stubborn. 24. **as 'ant nowt**, that has nothing. 25. **weänt 'a**, will not have. 26. **addle her breäd**, earn her own living.

Why? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an' weänt niver git hissén clear,
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor 'e coomed to the shere.

An' thin 'e coomed to the parish wi' lots o' Varsity debt,
Stook to his taaïl they did, an' 'e 'ant got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi' noän to lend 'im a shove,
Woorse nor a far-weltered yowe; fur, Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maäkin' 'em goä together, as they've good right to do.
Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o' 'er munny laaïd by?
Naäy — fur I luvved 'er a vast sight moor fur it; reäson why.

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to marry the lass,
Cooms of a gentleman burn; an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.
Woä then, proputty, wiltha? — an ass as near as mays nowt —
Woä then, wiltha? dangtha! — the bees is as fell as owt.

Breäk me a bit o' the esh for his 'eäd, lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputty, proputty's ivrything 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder, fur them as 'as it's the best.

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad.

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun 'a beän a laäzy lot,
Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin' whiniver munny was got.
Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways 'is munny was 'id.
But 'e tued an' moiled issén deäd, an' 'e died a good un, 'e did.

Looök thou theer wheer Wrigglesby beck cooms out by the 'ill!
Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I runs oop to the mill;
An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that thou'll live to see;
And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee.

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby I meäns to stick;
But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick. —
Coom oop, proputty, proputty — that's what I 'ears 'im saäy —
Proputty, proputty, proputty — canter an' canter awaäy.

(1869)

## WAGES

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
  Paid with a voice flying by to be lost on an endless sea —
Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong —
  Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover of glory she;
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be.

The wages of sin is death; if the wages of Virtue be dust,
  Would she have heart to endure for the life of the worm and the fly?
She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
  To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer sky;
Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

(*1867;* 1868)

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains —
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

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27. **nobbut,** only. **clear,** out of debt. 28. **ligs,** lies. **shere,** shire, county. 30. **shut on 'em,** rid of them. 31. **grip,** draining-ditch or trench. 32. **far-weltered yowe,** ewe lying on its back. (When a sheep gets on its back, it cannot get up without help.) 38. **burn,** born. 39. **mays nowt,** makes nothing. 40. **the bees . . . owt,** the flies are as fierce as anything. 41. **esh,** ash.

51. **ammost,** almost. 52. **tued . . . issén,** tugged and toiled himself. 53. **beck,** brook. 54. **Feyther run oop,** father extended his property to. 55. **brig,** bridge.

*Wages.* 6. **The . . . death.** Quoted from *Romans,* 6:23.

*The Higher Pantheism.* See Critical Notes and Swinburne's parody on the poem, *The Higher Pantheism in a Nutshell,* page 724.

Is not the Vision He, though He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the reason why,
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet —
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the fool,
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision — were it not He?
(1869)

## IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON

Nightingales warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee;
Shadows of three dead men
Walked in the walks with me,
Shadows of three dead men, and thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods,
The Master was far away;
Nightingales warbled and sang
Of a passion that lasts but a day;
Still in the house in his coffin the Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known
In courtesy like to thee;
Two dead men have I loved
With a love that ever will be;
Three dead men have I loved, and thou art last of the three.
(*1870;* 1874)

## FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower — but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.
(1869)

## From *THE IDYLLS OF THE KING*

### DEDICATION

These to His Memory — since he held them dear,
Perchance as finding there unconsciously
Some image of himself — I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —
These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,
"Who reverenced his conscience as his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it;
Who loved one only and who clave to her —"
Her — over all whose realms to their last isle,
Commingled with the gloom of imminent war,
The shadow of his loss drew like eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost him; he is gone.
We know him now; all narrow jealousies
Are silent, and we see him as he moved,

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15. **no God . . . fool.** See *Psalms* 14:1.—"The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" The poem is full of Biblical allusions.

*In the Garden at Swainston.* Swainston was the home of Tennyson's friend, Sir John Simeon. It was in the Isle of Wight, just off the south coast of England. Sir John died at Fribourg, Switzerland, in 1870. The other men referred to are Arthur Hallam and Henry Lushington (1812-55). Lushington was an admirer of Tennyson's youthful genius. *The Princess* was dedicated to him.

*The Idylls of the King.* See Critical Notes.

*Dedication.* Written in memory of Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria. He died in 1861. It was Prince Albert's admiration for *In Memoriam* that was chiefly responsible for Tennyson's appointment as poet laureate. Prince Albert served as a kind of model for the poet's sketch of Arthur, the blameless king.

7-10. This quotation is adapted from *Guinevere*, 464-479.

12. **imminent war,** a reference to the threatened war with the United States in 1861 when a United States officer seized two Confederate commissioners on the British mail steamer *Trent.* It was largely through Prince Albert's influence that the danger was averted.

How modest, kindly, all-accomplished, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that;
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of winged ambitions, nor a vantage-ground
For pleasure; but through all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne
And blackens every blot; for where is he
Who dares foreshadow for an only son
A lovelier life, a more unstained, than his?
Or how should England dreaming of *his* sons
Hope more for these than some inheritance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of peace —
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, through all times, Albert the Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but still endure;
Break not, for thou art royal, but endure,
Remembering all the beauty of that star
Which shone so close beside thee that ye made
One light together, but has passed and leaves
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow thee,
The love of all thy sons encompass thee,
The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,
The love of all thy people comfort thee,
Till God's love set thee at his side again!
(1862)

## LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
Then, fearing rust or soilure, fashioned for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazoned on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climbed
That eastern tower, and, entering, barred her door,
Stripped off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guessed a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh,
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle,
That at Caerleon — this at Camelot —
And, ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have killed, but God
Broke the strong lance, and rolled his enemy down,
And saved him. So she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond justs,
Which Arthur had ordained, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crowned him king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side;
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together, but their names were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a blow;
And down they fell and made the glen abhorred.
And there they lay till all their bones were bleached,

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17-27. **How modest,** etc. For a very different view of Prince Albert see Lytton Strachey's *Queen Victoria* (Harcourt, 1921), pp. 134 ff., 253 ff. 37. This line refers to the International Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, in which the Prince took an active part. 40. **thy land.** Prince Albert came from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a state in Germany.

*Lancelot and Elaine.* See Critical Notes.

8. **braided,** embroidered. 22. **Caerlyle,** Carlisle, in Cumberland. 23. **Caerleon,** an ancient town in Monmouthshire, where King Arthur frequently held court. **Camelot,** the place where Arthur had his palace and his court, and the place of the Round Table. 35. **Lyonnesse.** See note on *Morte d'Arthur,* line 4, page 38.

And lichened into color with the crags.
And he that once was king had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crowned skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Rolled into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn.
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
Plucked from the crown, and showed them to his knights,
Saying, "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's —
For public use. Henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a just for one of these;
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder!" Thus he spoke.
And eight years past, eight justs had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen
When all were won; but, meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a just
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake — for she had been sick — to Guinevere:
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair justs?" "Yea, lord," she said, "ye know it."
"Then will ye miss," he answered, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight ye love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He, thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded; and a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen —
However much he yearned to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon —
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle"; and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair justs? The knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, 'Lo, the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!' "
Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in vain:
"Are ye so wise? Ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer when ye loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allowed
Of all men; many a bard, without offense,
Has linked our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty; and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? Is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord —
But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me. Only here today
There gleamed a vague suspicion in his eyes;
Some meddling rogue has tampered with him — else

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44. **lichened**, became covered with lichen. 53. **shingly scaur**, a steep cliff covered with stones. 59. **Divinely**, by supernatural guidance. 65. **The heathen**, the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain. 75. **the place**, London.

91. **tale**, count, number. 94. **lets**, hinders. 118. **devoir**, duty. 125. **untruth**, unfaithfulness.

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself; but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all.
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the color. I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the justs;
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answered Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honors his own word
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me; but listen to me,
If I must find you wit. We hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers. Hide it therefore; go unknown.
Win! by this kiss you will; and our true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself;
They prove to him his work. Win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that showed the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadowed track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarmed.
And Lancelot marveled at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stepped the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter; mother of the house
There was not. Some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approached them; then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen; the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answered Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to just as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat: "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
"Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."
Here laughed the father, saying, "Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Just for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as willful as before."

"Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"For nothing. Surely I but played on Torre —
He seemed so sullen, vexed he could not go —
A jest, no more! For, knight, the maiden dreamt
That someone put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipped and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it —
But all was jest and joke among ourselves —
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.

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132. Cf. *Maud*, Part One, 82-84, page 98.

But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight.
Win shall I not, but do my best to win;
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answered Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend;
And you shall win this diamond — as I hear,
It is a fair large diamond — if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre;
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tossed about,
Flushed slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus returned:
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased; the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she looked,
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marred his face, and marked it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it; but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marred as he was, he seemed the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marred, of more than twice her years,
Seamed with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stepped with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind;
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertained.
And much they asked of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answered he;
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
"He learned and warned me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maimed;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
O tell us — for we live apart — you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
And answered him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thundered in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald centered in a sun
Of silver rays, that lightened as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount

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269. **glanced at**, spoke of. 279. **The Pagan**, the Saxons. The battle was fought in 520 at Mount Badon, supposed to be Badbury Hill, in Dorsetshire. The other battles mentioned in lines 287-300 are regarded as mythical. Tennyson follows the account given by Nennius in his *History of the Britons* (8th century). 293. **our Lady's Head**, image of the Virgin Mary. 297. **the wild White Horse**, the emblem of the Saxons.

Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the justs —
For if his own knight casts him down, he laughs,
Saying his knights are better men than he —
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him. I never saw his like; there lives
No greater leader."

While he uttered this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
"Save your great self, fair lord"; and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature; and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely through all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep,
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating.
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Passed inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turned, and smoothed
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He looked, and, more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dreamed she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, though he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.
Suddenly flashed on her a wild desire
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it,
"Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
My favor at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favor of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those who know me know."
"Yea, so," she answered; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you." And he turned
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answered: "True, my child.
Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to me.
What is it?" and she told him, "A red sleeve
Broidered with pearls," and brought it. Then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile,
Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and filled her with delight;
But left her all the paler when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazoned shield,
His brother's, which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answered, "twice today. I am your squire!"
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing: "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color back;
Once, twice, and thrice. Now get you hence to bed";
So kissed her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away. She stayed a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there —
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —
Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watched their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipped below the downs.
Then to her tower she climbed, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

338. rathe, early.

Meanwhile the new companions passed away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had prayed, labored and prayed,
And ever laboring had scooped himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
And cells and chambers. All were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows through the cave,
They rose, heard Mass, broke fast, and rode away.
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abashed Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"
And after muttering, "The great Lancelot,"
At last he got his breath and answered: "One,
One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there — then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reached the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run through the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Through knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever through the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work;
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answered young Lavaine and said:
"Me you call great; mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance; but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great.
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew: and then did either side,
They that assailed, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurled into it
Against the stronger. Little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
Count, baron — whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone —
The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we that know him know."
"How then? who then?" A fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.

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422. **Pendragon**, a title given to the chief leader. 423. **talk mysteriously**, a reference to the mystery of Arthur's birth, told about in *The Coming of Arthur*. 431. **samite**, a kind of heavy silk stuff.

446. **crescent**, in the period of promise.

They couched their spears and pricked their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driven backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark
And him that helms it; so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Pricked sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced through his side, and there snapped and remained.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully.
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party — though it seemed half-miracle
To those he fought with — drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew
Proclaiming his the prize who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the knights
His party, cried, "Advance and take thy prize
The diamond"; but he answered: "Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanished suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head."
"Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it; draw —
Draw" — and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
A marvelous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swooned away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanched his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wild world's rumor by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight, through whom we won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen today —
He seemed to me another Lancelot —
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —
He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied, needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given;
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honor; since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took
And gave the diamond. Then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth

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535. **Gawain**, son of King Lot of Orkney; he was the nephew of King Arthur, the brother of Gareth, and the half-brother of Modred. Modred was the traitor of the Round Table.

In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Passed, thinking, “Is it Lancelot who hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
And ridden away to die?” So feared the King,
And, after two days’ tarriance there, returned.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing asked,
“Love, are you yet so sick?” “Nay, lord,” she said.
“And where is Lancelot?” Then the Queen amazed,
“Was he not with you? Won he not your prize?”
“Nay, but one like him.” “Why, that like was he.”
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said: “Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquered; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, even the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might just unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decayed;
And added, ‘Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.’ ”

                    Then replied the King:
“Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter; now remains
But little cause for laughter. His own kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field.
Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broidered with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden’s gift.”

                    “Yea, lord,” she said,
“Thy hopes are mine,” and saying that, she choked,
And sharply turned about to hide her face,
Passed to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King’s couch, and writhed upon it,
And clenched her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shrieked out “Traitor!” to the unhearing wall,
Then flashed into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while through all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touched at all points except the poplar grove,
And came at last, though late, to Astolat;
Whom glittering in enameled arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, “What news from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?”
                    “He won.”
“I knew it,” she said. “But parted from the justs
Hurt in the side”; whereat she caught her breath.
Through her own side she felt the sharp lance go.
Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she swooned.
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridden a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat: “Bide with us,
And ride no more at random, noble prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for. Furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon;
Needs must we hear.” To this the courteous prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And stayed; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine.
Where could be found face daintier? Then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect; again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turned.

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592. **So fine a fear, etc.** There is a touch of sarcasm in Arthur’s words.

"Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!"
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and low smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebelled against it, saying to him: "Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipped her at, and went
To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But an ye will it, let me see the shield."
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crowned with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mocked:
"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!"
"And right was I," she answered merrily, "I,
Who dreamed my knight the greatest knight of all."
"And if *I* dreamed," said Gawain, "that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!
Speak therefore; shall I waste myself in vain?"
Full simple was her answer: "What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talked of love,
Wished it had been my mother, for they talked,
Meseemed, of what they knew not; so myself —
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love."
"Yea, by God's death," said he, "ye love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all others know,
And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away;
But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! He wore your sleeve;
Would he break faith with one I may not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
Nay — like enow. Why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also — here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times! — a thousand times farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter! There, I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
And slightly kissed the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leaped on his horse, and caroling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he passed; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learned,
But failed to find him, though I rode all round
The region; but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore. She loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond. She will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frowned, and replied,
"Too courteous truly! Ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Lingered that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzzed abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were pricked at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot;
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoomed her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stooped so low,
Marred her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared;
Till even the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crushed the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face, and said,
"Father, you call me willful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will; and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me hence,"
She answered, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine.
Bide," answered he; "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Aye," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for the lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens. Let me hence,
I pray you." Then her father nodding said:
"Aye, aye, the diamond. Wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest. Yea, and you must give it —
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's —
Nay, I mean nothing; so then, get you gone,
Being so very willful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allowed, she slipped away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word hummed in her ear,
"Being so very willful you must go,"
And changed itself and echoed in her heart,
"Being so very willful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answered it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers;
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turned Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were rendered mystically,
Passed up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves. There first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall; her scarlet sleeve,
Though carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Streamed from it still; and in her heart she laughed,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gained the cell wherein he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,

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798. **His own far blood,** his distant relatives.

Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Uttered a little tender, dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he rolled his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
"Your prize, the diamond sent you by the King."
His eyes glistened; she fancied, "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assigned to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assigned, he kissed her face.
At once she slipped like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? His large black eyes,
Yet larger through his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colors on her simple face;
And Lancelot looked and was perplexed in mind,
And being weak in body said no more,
But did not love the color; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turned
Sighing, and feigned a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided through the fields,
And passed beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night, but woke with dawn, and passed
Down through the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave. So day by day she passed
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night; and Lancelot
Would, though he called his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he. But the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skilled in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straitened him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not live;
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
Beamed on his fancy, spoke, he answered not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimmed her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmured, "Vain, in vain! it cannot be.
He will not love me. How then? Must I die?"
Then as a little helpless, innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turned, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And "Him or death," she muttered, "death or him,"
Again and like a burthen, "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deemed she looked her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,

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880. **that ghostly grace**, the vision of Guinevere. 883. **the rough sickness**, delirium.

"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
And Lancelot ever pressed upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers — "and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have ye done me that I make
My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I go today." Then out she brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
"Speak; that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you; let me die."
"Ah, sister," answered Lancelot, "what is this?"
And innocently extending her white arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love — to be your wife."
And Lancelot answered, "Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;
But now there never will be wife of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you through the world."
And Lancelot answered: "Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation — nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your face —
Alas for me then, my good days are done!"
"Nay, noble maid," he answered, "ten times nay!
This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,
Most common; yea, I know it of mine own self,
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy; furthermore,
Even to the death, as though ye were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blushed nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied,
"Of all this will I nothing"; and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom through those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father: "Aye, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me; what I can I will";
And there that day remained, and toward even
Sent for his shield. Full meekly rose the maid,
Stripped off the case, and gave the naked shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back, and looked
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat.
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left
But still she heard him, still his picture formed
And grew between her and the pictured wall.

905. the victim's . . . fall, a reference to the ancient custom of decorating animals for sacrifice.

Then came her father, saying in low tones,
"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answered with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching through the darkness, called; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixed
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And called her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it; sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true love though given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain.
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? Then bitter death must be.
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away;
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay;
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! Let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and called
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said: "Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seemed a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it; there ye fixed
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I dreamed
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will';
And there I woke, but still the wish remained.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one.
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? And wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say:
"I never loved him; an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down.
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To whom the gentle sister made reply:
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

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1015-1016. **Phantom . . . death.** In Celtic folklore a supernatural being, the banshee, was supposed to warn a family of approaching death by wailing or by singing in a mournful voice.

"Highest?" the father answered, echoing "highest?" —
He meant to break the passion in her — "nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame,
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger. These are slanders; never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe,
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain; so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, though my love had no return.
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire,
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he asked,
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly," she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised, which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said — "ye never yet
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,
My latest. Lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat has gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me; he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased. Her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deemed her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings passed, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Passed like a shadow through the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Palled all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kissed her quiet brows, and saying to her,
"Sister, farewell forever," and again,
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
Oared by the dumb, went upward with the flood —
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as though she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds; for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty

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**1092. the ghostly man,** the spiritual man, priest.

She might have seemed her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kissed her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling uttered: "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's. These are words;
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words,
Perchance, we both can pardon; but, my Queen,
I hear of rumors flying through your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect; let rumors be.
When did not rumors fly? These, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turned away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold, passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! They had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that, however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful; and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule,
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her she shines me down;
An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer — as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds — hers not mine —
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will —
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, through the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flashed, and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flashed, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they passed away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leaned, in half disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly passed the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood armed, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that asked,
"What is it?" But that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appalled them, and they said,
"He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! What are they? Flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairyland?

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1170. **oriel**, a large bay window. 1178. **tawnier . . . cygnet's.** The down of the cygnet, or young swan, is of a brownish hue.

For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights. Then turned the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wondered at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her;
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stooped, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime called the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touched were they, half-thinking that her lips
Who had devised the letter moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love.
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature; what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Though, had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And helped her from herself."

Then said the Queen —
Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm:
"Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have helped her from her death."
He raised his head; their eyes met, and hers fell,
He adding: "Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me through the world, she asked;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down,
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her — then would I,
More specially were he she wedded poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance. More than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answered: "O my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshaled Order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And Mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them: "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazoned on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought

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1256-1257. **Sir Percivale, Sir Galahad.** These were the purest knights of the Round Table.

1316. **worship,** honor. 1319-1320. **that shrine . . . richest,** the burial place of kings.

Thereafter. But when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who marked Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sighed in passing, "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answered with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approached him, and with full affection said:

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watched thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long practiced knight
And let the younger and unskilled go by
To win his honor and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvelously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answered Lancelot: "Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart —
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said the King.
"Let love be free; free love is for the best.
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? Yet thee
She failed to bind, though being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answered nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watched
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself: "Ah, simple heart and sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Aye, that will I. Farewell too — now at last —
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love'?
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
Caught from his mother's arms — the wondrous one
Who passes through the vision of the night —
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
Heard on the winding waters; eve and morn
She kissed me, saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son,' and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drowned me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? What profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it.
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me; but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me. Not without
She wills it — would I, if she willed it? Nay,
Who knows? But if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groaned Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man. (1859)

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1389. **crescent**, growing. 1417-1418. A full account of Lancelot's repentance and death is given in Malory, 20 and 21. See Critical Notes; also *The Holy Grail*, 763-883, pages 146-147.

## THE HOLY GRAIL

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
Whom Arthur and his knighthood called the Pure,
Had passed into the silent life of prayer,
Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the cowl
The helmet in an abbey far away
From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
Ambrosius, loved him much beyond the rest,
And honored him, and wrought into his heart
A way by love that wakened love within,
To answer that which came; and as they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darkening half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puffed the swaying branches into smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he died,
The monk Ambrosius questioned Percivale:

"O brother, I have seen this yew-tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred years;
For never have I known the world without,
Nor ever strayed beyond the pale. But thee,
When first thou camest — such a courtesy
Spake through the limbs and in the voice — I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to coins,
Some true, some light, but every one of you
Stamped with the image of the King; and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the Table Round,
My brother? Was it earthly passion crossed?"

"Nay," said the knight; "for no such passion mine.
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rivalries,
And earthly heats that spring and sparkle out
Among us in the justs, while women watch
Who wins, who falls, and waste the spiritual strength
Within us, better offered up to heaven."

To whom the monk: "The Holy Grail! — I trust
We are green in Heaven's eyes; but here too much
We molder — as to things without, I mean —
Yet one of your own knights, a guest of ours,
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so low
We heard not half of what he said. What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and goes?"

"Nay, monk! what phantom?" answered Percivale.
"The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.
This, from the blessed land of Aromat —
After the day of darkness, when the dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the good saint
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was healed at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven, and disappeared."

To whom the monk: "From our old books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glastonbury,
And there the heathen Prince, Arviragus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to build;
And there he built with wattles from the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours, but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have read.
But who first saw the holy thing today?"

"A woman," answered Percivale, "a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; though never maiden glowed,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,

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*The Holy Grail.* See Critical Notes.
15. **That puffed . . . smoke,** a reference to the abundant pollen of the yew. 21. **the pale,** the limits of the monastery grounds.

48. **Aromat,** from Arimathea, a town in Palestine. 49. **the day of darkness,** a reference to the darkness following the Crucifixion. 50. **Moriah,** a mountain near Jerusalem, the site of Solomon's temple. See *Matthew,* 27:45-53. —"And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city" (vv. 51-53). 61. **Arviragus,** supposed to have reigned as king of Britain from 44 to 72 A.D.

Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she prayed and fasted all the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down through five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
And heal the world of all their wickedness!
'O Father!' asked the maiden, 'might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?' 'Nay,' said he,
'I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow.'
And so she prayed and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, through her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

"For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness!
And 'O my brother Percivale,' she said,
'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail;
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, "It is not Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight." And the slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me — O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and then
Streamed through my cell a cold and silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Passed, and the beam decayed, and from the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother; fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be healed."

"Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and prayed
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and prayed even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful!'
Said Arthur, when he dubbed him knight, and none
In so young youth was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, filled me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seemed
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.

"Sister or brother none had he; but some
Called him a son of Lancelot, and some said
Begotten by enchantment — chatterers they,
Like birds of passage piping up and down,
That gape for flies — we know not whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly lewd?

"But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break through all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city'; and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Through him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.

"Then came a year of miracle. O brother,
In our great hall there stood a vacant chair,
Fashioned by Merlin ere he passed away,
And carven with strange figures; and in and out
The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll

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135. **Galahad.** See *Sir Galahad*, page 50. 168. **Merlin,** the magician of Arthur's court. He made the Round Table at Camelot and built the castle to accommodate it.

Of letters in a tongue no man could read.
And Merlin called it 'the Siege Perilous,'
Perilous for good and ill; for there, he said,
No man could sit but he should lose himself.
And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but he,
Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's doom,
Cried, 'If I lose myself, I save myself!'

"Then on a summer night it came to pass,
While the great banquet lay along the hall,
That Galahad would sit down in Merlin's chair.

"And all at once, as there we sat, we heard
A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the hall
A beam of light seven times more clear than day;
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
All over covered with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and it passed.
But every knight beheld his fellow's face
As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
And, staring each at other like dumb men,
Stood, till I found a voice and sware a vow.

"I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest."

Then spake the monk Ambrosius, asking him,
"What said the King? Did Arthur take the vow?"

"Nay, for my lord," said Percivale, "the King,
Was not in hall; for early that same day,
Scaped through a cavern from a bandit bold,
An outraged maiden sprang into the hall
Crying on help; for all her shining hair
Was smeared with earth, and either milky arm
Red-rent with hooks of bramble, and all she wore
Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is torn
In tempest. So the King arose and went
To smoke the scandalous hive of those wild bees
That made such honey in his realm. Howbeit
Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then began
To darken under Camelot; whence the King
Looked up, calling aloud, 'Lo, there! the roofs
Of our great hall are rolled in thundersmoke!
Pray heaven, they be not smitten by the bolt!'
For dear to Arthur was that hall of ours,
As having there so oft with all his knights
Feasted, and as the stateliest under heaven.

"O brother, had you known our mighty hall,
Which Merlin built for Arthur long ago!
For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,
Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rushing brook,
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin built.
And four great zones of sculpture, set betwixt
With many a mystic symbol, gird the hall;
And in the lowest beasts are slaying men,
And in the second men are slaying beasts,
And on the third are warriors, perfect men,
And on the fourth are men with growing wings,
And over all one statue in the mold
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a crown,
And peaked wings pointed to the Northern Star.
And eastward fronts the statue, and the crown
And both the wings are made of gold, and flame
At sunrise till the people in far fields
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, 'We have still a king.'

"And, brother, had you known our hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all the lands!
Where twelve great windows blazon Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the board
Streams through the twelve great battles of our King.

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172. **the Siege Perilous**, the perilous seat, Merlin's magic chair. It may represent some supreme test of spiritual worth. Tennyson explained it as "spiritual imagination." Other explanations include "the temptation of sense," and "the chair of knowledge." 175-176. **Merlin . . . lost.** In the medieval romances Merlin is left under a spell by Vivien in a thorn tree; in Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien* he is overcome by Vivien and confined in a hollow tower from which there is no escape. 178. **If I . . . myself.** From *Matthew*, 10:39.—"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

232. **zones of sculpture.** These zones represent four stages in human progress, from the beastly to the spiritual. 250. **twelve great battles.** Cf. *Lancelot and Elaine*, 285 ff., page 123.

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern end,
Wealthy with wandering lines of mount and mere,
Where Arthur finds the brand Excalibur.
And also one to the west, and counter to it,
And blank; and who shall blazon it? when and how? —
O there, perchance, when all our wars are done,
The brand Excalibur will be cast away!

"So to this hall full quickly rode the King,
In horror lest the work by Merlin wrought,
Dreamlike, should on the sudden vanish, wrapped
In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced, and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all;
And many of those who burned the hold, their arms
Hacked, and their foreheads grimed with smoke and seared,
Followed, and in among bright faces, ours,
Full of the vision, pressed; and then the King
Spake to me, being nearest, 'Percivale' —
Because the hall was all in tumult — some
Vowing, and some protesting — 'what is this?'

"O brother, when I told him what had chanced,
My sister's vision and the rest, his face
Darkened, as I have seen it more than once,
When some brave deed seemed to be done in vain,
Darken; and 'Woe is me, my knights,' he cried,
'Had I been here, ye had not sworn the vow.'
Bold was mine answer, 'Had thyself been here,
My King, thou wouldst have sworn.' 'Yea, yea,' said he,
'Art thou so bold and hast not seen the Grail?'

" 'Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I saw the light,
But since I did not see the holy thing,
I sware a vow to follow it till I saw.'

"Then when he asked us, knight by knight, if any
Had seen it, all their answers were as one:
'Nay, lord, and therefore have we sworn our vows.'

" 'Lo, now,' said Arthur, 'have ye seen a cloud?
What go ye into the wilderness to see?'

"Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, called,
'But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry —
"O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me!" '

" 'Ah, Galahad, Galahad,' said the King, 'for such
As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a sign —
Holier is none, my Percivale, than she —
A sign to maim this Order which I made.
But ye that follow but the leader's bell' —
Brother, the King was hard upon his knights —
'Taliessin is our fullest throat of song,
And one hath sung and all the dumb will sing.
Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath overborne
Five knights at once, and every younger knight,
Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
Till overborne by one, he learns — and ye,
What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor Percivales' —
For thus it pleased the King to range me close
After Sir Galahad — 'nay,' said he, 'but men
With strength and will to right the wronged, of power
To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,
Knights that in twelve great battles splashed and dyed
The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood —
But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.
Go, since your vows are sacred, being made.
Yet — for ye know the cries of all my realm
Pass through this hall — how often, O my knights,
Your places being vacant at my side,
This chance of noble deeds will come and go
Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires
Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,
Return no more. Ye think I show myself
Too dark a prophet. Come now, let us meet
The morrow morn once more in one full field
Of gracious pastime, that once more the King,
Before ye leave him for this quest, may count

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251-253. **Nay . . . Excalibur.** Cf. *Morte d'Arthur*, 27 ff., page 38. 275-276. **Woe . . . vow.** Arthur disapproves of the quest since the knights have not the spiritual character to succeed. He sees in it only the breaking-up of the Round Table.

287. **What . . . see.** From *Matthew*, 11:7.—"And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, 'What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken in the wind?' " 298. **follow . . . bell,** like a flock of stupid sheep. 300. **Taliessin,** a famous Welsh bard, said to have lived in the sixth century. 312. **White Horse,** the emblem of the Saxons, regarded as heathen. 319. **wandering fires,** like the will-o-the-wisp, made by the phosphorus in plants and water.

The yet-unbroken strength of all his knights,
Rejoicing in that Order which he made.'

"So when the sun broke next from underground,
All the great Table of our Arthur closed
And clashed in such a tourney and so full,
So many lances broken — never yet
Had Camelot seen the like since Arthur came;
And I myself and Galahad, for a strength
Was in us from the vision, overthrew
So many knights that all the people cried,
And almost burst the barriers in their heat,
Shouting, 'Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!'

"But when the next day brake from underground —
O brother, had you known our Camelot,
Built by old kings, age after age, so old
The King himself had fears that it would fall,
So strange, and rich, and dim; for where the roofs
Tottered toward each other in the sky,
Met foreheads all along the street of those
Who watched us pass; and lower, and where the long
Rich galleries, lady-laden, weighed the necks
Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
Thicker than drops from thunder, showers of flowers
Fell as we passed; and men and boys astride
On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin, swan,
At all the corners, named us each by name,
Calling 'God speed!' but in the ways below
The knights and ladies wept, and rich and poor
Wept, and the King himself could hardly speak
For grief, and all in middle street the Queen,
Who rode by Lancelot, wailed and shrieked aloud,
'This madness has come on us for our sins.'
So to the Gate of the Three Queens we came,
Where Arthur's wars are rendered mystically,
And thence departed every one his way.

"And I was lifted up in heart, and thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down the knights,
So many and famous names; and never yet
Had heaven appeared so blue, nor earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I knew
That I should light upon the Holy Grail.

"Thereafter, the dark warning of our King,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my mind.
Then every evil word I had spoken once,
And every evil thought I had thought of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, 'This quest is not for thee.'
And lifting up mine eyes, I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death;
And I, too, cried, 'This quest is not for thee.'

"And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Played ever back upon the sloping wave
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. 'I will rest here,'
I said; 'I am not worthy of the quest';
But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And thirsting in a land of sand and thorns.

"And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose,
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,
'Rest here'; but when I touched her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

"And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flashed a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field
The plowman left his plowing and fell down
Before it; where it glittered on her pail
The milkmaid left her milking and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
'The sun is rising,' though the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armor with a crown of gold
About a casque all jewels, and his horse
In golden armor jeweled everywhere;
And on the splendor came, flashing me blind,
And seemed to me the lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant

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350. **wyvern . . . swan.** These are all heraldic devices. The wyvern was a two-legged dragon with wings and with barbed tail tied in a knot. The griffin was half lion and half eagle.

387-390. **But . . . thorns.** Percivale finds that the things he has held most dear are only illusions: pleasures of the senses (379-390); love of wife and family (391-400); wealth and splendor (401-420); fame and glory (421-439).

To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Opened his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touched him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

"And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top a city walled; the spires
Pricked with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
And by the gateway stirred a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, 'Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!'
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And thence I passed
Far through a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
'Where is that goodly company,' said I,
'That so cried out upon me?' And he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasped,
'Whence and what art thou?' and even as he spoke
Fell into dust and disappeared, and I
Was left alone once more and cried in grief,
'Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust!'

"And thence I dropped into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
Was lowest found a chapel, and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage,
To whom I told my phantoms, and he said:

" 'O son, thou hast not true humility,
The highest virtue, mother of them all;
For when the Lord of all things made Himself
Naked of glory for His mortal change,
"Take thou my robe," she said, "for all is thine,"
And all her form shone forth with sudden light
So that the angels were amazed, and she
Followed Him down, and like a flying star
Led on the gray-haired wisdom of the East.
But her thou hast not known; for what is this
Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and thy sins?
Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself
As Galahad.' When the hermit made an end,
In silver armor suddenly Galahad shone
Before us, and against the chapel door
Laid lance and entered, and we knelt in prayer.
And there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,
And at the sacring of the Mass I saw
The holy elements alone; but he,
'Saw ye no more?' I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine.
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
This holy thing, failed from my side, nor come
Covered, but moving with me night and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the blackened marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And passed through Pagan realms, and made them mine,
And clashed with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,
And broke through all, and in the strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,
And hence I go, and one will crown me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I go.'

"While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed.
Then, when the day began to wane, we went.

"There rose a hill that none but man could climb,
Scarred with a hundred wintry watercourses—
Storm at the top, and when we gained it, storm
Round us and death; for every moment glanced
His silver arms and gloomed, so quick and thick
The lightnings here and there to left and right
Struck, till the dry old trunks about us, dead,
Yea, rotten with a hundred years of death,
Sprang into fire. And at the base we found
On either hand, as far as eye could see,
A great black swamp and of an evil smell,
Part black, part whitened with the bones of men,
Not to be crossed, save that some ancient king
Had built a way, where, linked with many a bridge,
A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,
And every bridge as quickly as he crossed

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449. **she,** humility. 453. **the gray-haired . . . East,** the three Wise Men who visited the infant Christ on the night of his birth (*Matthew*, 2). 462. **the sacring of the Mass,** the consecration of the bread and wine.

489. See Critical Notes.

Sprang into fire and vanished, though I yearned
To follow; and thrice above him all the heavens
Opened and blazed with thunder such as seemed
Shoutings of all the sons of God. And first
At once I saw him far on the great Sea,
In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud.
And with exceeding swiftness ran the boat,
If boat it were — I saw not whence it came.
And when the heavens opened and blazed again
Roaring, I saw him like a silver star —
And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?
And o'er his head the Holy Vessel hung
Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
For now I knew the veil had been withdrawn.
Then in a moment when they blazed again
Opening, I saw the least of little stars
Down on the waste, and straight beyond the star
I saw the spiritual city and all her spires
And gateways in a glory like one pearl —
No larger, though the goal of all the saints —
Strike from the sea; and from the star there shot
A rose-red sparkle to the city, and there
Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy Grail,
Which never eyes on earth again shall see.
Then fell the floods of heaven drowning the deep,
And how my feet recrossed the deathful ridge
No memory in me lives; but that I touched
The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and thence
Taking my war-horse from the holy man,
Glad that no phantom vexed me more, returned
To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's wars."

"O brother," asked Ambrosius — "for in sooth
These ancient books — and they would win thee — teem,
Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
With miracles and marvels like to these,
Not all unlike; which oftentime I read,
Who read but on my breviary with ease,
Till my head swims, and then go forth and pass
Down to the little thorpe that lies so close,
And almost plastered like a martin's nest
To these old walls — and mingle with our folk;
And knowing every honest face of theirs
As well as ever shepherd knew his sheep,
And every homely secret in their hearts,
Delight myself with gossip and old wives,
And ills and aches, and teethings, lyings-in,
And mirthful sayings, children of the place,
That have no meaning half a league away;
Or lulling random squabbles when they rise,
Chafferings and chatterings at the market-cross,
Rejoice, small man, in this small world of mine,
Yea, even in their hens and in their eggs —
O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
Came ye on none but phantoms in your quest,
No man, no woman?"

Then Sir Percivale:
"All men, to one so bound by such a vow,
And women were as phantoms. O my brother,
Why wilt thou shame me to confess to thee
How far I faltered from my quest and vow?
For after I had lain so many nights,
A bed-mate of the snail and eft and snake,
In grass and burdock, I was changed to wan
And meager, and the vision had not come;
And then I chanced upon a goodly town
With one great dwelling in the middle of it.
Thither I made, and there was I disarmed
By maidens each as fair as any flower;
But when they led me into hall, behold,
The princess of that castle was the one,
Brother, and that one only, who had ever
Made my heart leap; for when I moved of old
A slender page about her father's hall,
And she a slender maiden, all my heart
Went after her with longing, yet we twain
Had never kissed a kiss or vowed a vow.
And now I came upon her once again,
And one had wedded her, and he was dead,
And all his land and wealth and state were hers.
And while I tarried, every day she set
A banquet richer than the day before
By me, for all her longing and her will
Was toward me as of old; till one fair morn,
I walking to and fro beside a stream
That flashed across her orchard underneath
Her castle-walls, she stole upon my walk,
And calling me the greatest of all knights,
Embraced me, and so kissed me the first time,
And gave herself and all her wealth to me.
Then I remembered Arthur's warning word,
That most of us would follow wandering fires,

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526. **the spiritual city**, the New Jerusalem, of *Revelation*, 21.—"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (v. 2).

558. **the market-cross.** During the Middle Ages nearly every town had a cross standing in the market-place.

And the quest faded in my heart. Anon,
The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and tongue:
'We have heard of thee; thou art our greatest knight;
Our Lady says it, and we well believe.
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,
And thou shalt be as Arthur in our land.'
O me, my brother! but one night my vow
Burned me within, so that I rose and fled,
But wailed and wept, and hated mine own self,
And even the holy quest, and all but her;
Then, after I was joined with Galahad,
Cared not for her nor anything upon earth."

Then said the monk: "Poor men, when yule is cold,
Must be content to sit by little fires.
And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven
That brought thee here to this poor house of ours
Where all the brethren are so hard, to warm
My cold heart with a friend; but O the pity
To find thine own first love once more — to hold,
Hold her a wealthy bride within thine arms,
Or all but hold, and then — cast her aside,
Forgoing all her sweetness, like a weed!
For we that want the warmth of double life,
We that are plagued with dreams of something sweet
Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich —
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-wise,
Seeing I never strayed beyond the cell,
But live like an old badger in his earth,
With earth about him everywhere, despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none beside,
None of your knights?"

"Yea, so," said Percivale.
"One night my pathway swerving east, I saw
The pelican on the casque of our Sir Bors
All in the middle of the rising moon,
And toward him spurred, and hailed him, and he me,
And each made joy of either. Then he asked,
'Where is he? Hast thou seen him — Lancelot? — Once,'
Said good Sir Bors, 'he dashed across me — mad,
And maddening what he rode; and when I cried,
"Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
So holy?" Lancelot shouted, "Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way!"
So vanished.'

"Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lancelot,
Because his former madness, once the talk
And scandal of our table, had returned;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship him
That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors
Beyond the rest. He well had been content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,
Being so clouded with his grief and love,
Small heart was his after the holy quest.
If God would send the vision, well; if not,
The quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

"And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors
Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,
And found a people there among their crags,
Our race and blood, a remnant that were left
Paynim amid their circles, and the stones
They pitch up straight to heaven; and their wise men
Were strong in that old magic which can trace
The wandering of the stars, and scoffed at him
And this high quest as at a simple thing,
Told him he followed — almost Arthur's words —
A mocking fire: 'What other fire than he
Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,
And the sea rolls, and all the world is warmed?'
And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd,
Hearing he had a difference with their priests,
Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell
Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there
In darkness through innumerable hours
He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle — what else? —
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipped and fell,

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600. **The heads of all her people,** all her leading people. 612. **when yule is cold,** after the great fires of the Christmas yule log are passed.

643. **For . . . way.** He means his love for Guinevere; from *Proverbs*, 22:13.—"The slothful man saith, 'There is a lion without; I shall be slain in the streets.'" 646. **madness.** Malory (11 and 12) tells of the madness of Lancelot, caused by the anger of Guinevere when she thought he was in love with the daughter of King Pelles. After two years he was restored by the Grail. 661. **Paynim . . . circles.** These pagans were still followers of the Druids, an ancient religious order of the Celts. The circles were their places of worship, like the ruins at Stonehenge. 667. **he,** the sun, worshiped by these pagans. 668. **blows,** blooms. 675. **the hollow-ringing heavens.** It was an old belief that the movement of the heavenly bodies produced "the music of the spheres."

Such as no wind could move; and through the gap
Glimmered the streaming scud. Then came a night
Still as the day was loud, and through the gap
The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round —
For, brother, so one night, because they roll
Through such a round in heaven, we named the stars,
Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —
And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,
In on him shone: 'And then to me, to me,'
Said good Sir Bors, 'beyond all hopes of mine,
Who scarce had prayed or asked it for myself —
Across the seven clear stars — O grace to me! —
In color like the fingers of a hand
Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
Glided and passed, and close upon it pealed
A sharp quick thunder.' Afterwards, a maid,
Who kept our holy faith among her kin
In secret, entering, loosed and let him go."

To whom the monk: "And I remember now
That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors it was
Who spake so low and sadly at our board,
And mighty reverent at our grace was he;
A square-set man and honest, and his eyes,
An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,
Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a cloud,
But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.
Aye, aye, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reached
The city, found ye all your knights returned,
Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,
Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?"

Then answered Percivale: "And that can I,
Brother, and truly; since the living words
Of so great men as Lancelot and our King
Pass not from door to door and out again,
But sit within the house. O when we reached
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Cracked basilisks, and splintered cockatrices,
And shattered talbots, which had left the stones
Raw that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

"And there sat Arthur on the dais-throne,
And those that had gone out upon the quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them,
And those that had not, stood before the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose and bade me hail,
Saying, 'A welfare in thine eyes reproves
Our fear of some disastrous chance for thee
On hill or plain, at sea or flooding ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of late
Among the strange devices of our kings,
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall of ours,
And from the statue Merlin molded for us
Half-wrenched a golden wing; but now — the quest,
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy Cup
That Joseph brought of old to Glastonbury?'

"So when I told him all thyself hast heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixed resolve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answered not, but, sharply turning, asked
Of Gawain, 'Gawain, was this quest for thee?'

" 'Nay, lord,' said Gawain, 'not for such as I.
Therefore I communed with a saintly man,
Who made me sure the quest was not for me;
For I was much a-wearied of the quest,
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for this,
My twelvemonth and a day were pleasant to me.'

"He ceased; and Arthur turned to whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering, pushed
Athwart the throng to Lancelot, caught his hand,
Held it, and there, half-hidden by him, stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to him,
'Hail, Bors! If ever loyal man and true
Could see it, thou hast seen the Grail'; and Bors:
'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it;
I saw it'; and the tears were in his eyes.

"Then there remained but Lancelot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the storm.

---

679. **the streaming scud**, vapory clouds. 681. **The seven clear stars**, the seven stars of the constellation of the Great Bear, which was called the Table Round because it revolves around the Polar Star. 713-717. **The city . . . hall.** The city had gone to decay since the knights' departure. The wind had torn the carved decorations from the buildings. The unicorn was a fabulous beast like a horse, but with a single horn in the middle of the forehead; the basilisk was a fabulous monster supposed to kill by its look; the cockatrice was a winged snake; the talbot was a sort of hunting dog.

Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the last;
'Thou, too, my Lancelot,' asked the King, 'my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this quest availed for thee?'

"'Our mightiest!' answered Lancelot, with a groan;
'O King!' — and when he paused methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes —
'O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
Happier are those that welter in their sin,
Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
Slime of the ditch; but in me lived a sin
So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
And poisonous grew together, each as each,
Not to be plucked asunder; and when thy knights
Sware, I sware with them only in the hope
That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
They might be plucked asunder. Then I spake
To one most holy saint, who wept and said
That, save they could be plucked asunder, all
My quest were but in vain; to whom I vowed
That I would work according as he willed.
And forth I went, and while I yearned and strove
To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
My madness came upon me as of old,
And whipped me into waste fields far away.
There was I beaten down by little men,
Mean knights, to whom the moving of my sword
And shadow of my spear had been enow
To scare them from me once; and then I came
All in my folly to the naked shore,
Wide flats, where nothing but coarse grasses grew;
But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
Though heaped in mounds and ridges all the sea
Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
Were shaken with the motion and the sound.
And blackening in the sea-foam swayed a boat,
Half-swallowed in it, anchored with a chain;
And in my madness to myself I said,
"I will embark and I will lose myself,
And in the great sea wash away my sin."
I burst the chain; I sprang into the boat.
Seven days I drove along the dreary deep,
And with me drove the moon and all the stars;
And the wind fell, and on the seventh night
I heard the shingle grinding in the surge,
And felt the boat shock earth, and looking up,
Behold, the enchanted towers of Carbonek,
A castle like a rock upon a rock,
With chasm-like portals open to the sea,
And steps that met the breaker! There was none
Stood near it but a lion on each side
That kept the entry, and the moon was full.
Then from the boat I leapt, and up the stairs,
There drew my sword. With sudden-flaring manes
Those two great beasts rose upright like a man,
Each gripped a shoulder, and I stood between,
And, when I would have smitten them, heard a voice,
"Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal." Then with violence
The sword was dashed from out my hand, and fell.
And up into the sounding hall I passed;
But nothing in the sounding hall I saw —
No bench nor table, painting on the wall
Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
Through the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
But always in the quiet house I heard,
Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower
To the eastward. Up I climbed a thousand steps
With pain; as in a dream I seemed to climb
Forever. At the last I reached a door;
A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
"Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!"
Then in my madness I essayed the door;
It gave, and through a stormy glare, a heat
As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swooned away —

---

759-760. **like . . . last,** a reference to the wine served at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, *John*, 2:1-10. The ruler of the feast tasted the wine, not knowing that Jesus had made it out of water, and said to the bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now" (v. 10).

808. **shingle,** small rounded stones on the seashore. 810. **Carbonek,** a castle mentioned several times by Malory, said to be the place where the Holy Grail was kept. 828. **oriel,** a large bay window. 840. **a seven-times-heated furnace,** like the one in which Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were cast because they refused to worship the golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar (*Daniel*, 3:1-30).

O yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All palled in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes!
And but for all my madness and my sin,
And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
That which I saw; but what I saw was veiled
And covered, and this quest was not for me.'

"So speaking, and here ceasing, Lancelot left
The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain — nay,
Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words —
A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
Now boldened by the silence of his King —
Well, I will tell thee: 'O King, my liege,' he said,
'Hath Gawain failed in any quest of thine?
When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least.
But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
Henceforward.'

" 'Deafer,' said the blameless King,
'Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
Being too blind to have desire to see.
But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their sight.
For every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music through them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord;
And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

" 'Nay — but thou errest, Lancelot; never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness but apart there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

" 'And spake I not too truly, O my knights?
Was I too dark a prophet when I said
To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
That most of them would follow wandering fires,
Lost in the quagmire? — lost to me and gone,
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order — scarce returned a tithe —
And out of those to whom the vision came
My greatest hardly will believe he saw.
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And, leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to face,
And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him otherwhere.

" 'And some among you held that if the King
Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow.
Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
That which he rules, and is but as the hind
To whom a space of land is given to plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted field
Before his work be done, but, being done,
Let visions of the night or of the day
Come as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision — yea, his very hand and foot —
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again. Ye have seen what ye have seen.'

"So spake the King; I knew not all he meant."

(1869)

## TO THE QUEEN

O loyal to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee —
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the Prince
Who scarce had plucked his flickering life again
From halfway down the shadow of the grave
Passed with thee through thy people and their love,
And London rolled one tide of joy through all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues of man
And welcome! Witness, too, the silent cry,

---

862. **deafer . . . cat.** Male white cats with blue eyes are frequently deaf.

*To the Queen.* The Queen is Victoria.

3. **that rememberable day,** a reference to the public thanksgiving in February, 1872, upon the recovery of the Prince of Wales from typhoid fever.

The prayer of many a race and creed, and clime —
Thunderless lightnings striking under sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy realm,
And that true North, whereof we lately heard
A strain to shame us, "Keep you to yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends — your love
Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and go."
Is this the tone of empire? here the faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her voice
And meaning whom the roar of Hougoumont
Left mightiest of all peoples under heaven?
What shock has fooled her since, that she should speak
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier — hour by hour!
The voice of Britain, or a sinking land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among her seas?
*There* rang her voice, when the full city pealed
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to their crown
Are loyal to their own far sons, who love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless homes
Forever-broadening England, and her throne
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
That knows not her own greatness; if she knows
And dreads it we are fallen. — But thou, my Queen,
Not for itself, but through thy living love
For one to whom I made it o'er his grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul;
Ideal manhood closed in real man,
Rather than that gray king whose name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still; or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
Touched by the adulterous finger of a time
That hovered between war and wantonness,
And crownings and dethronements. Take withal
Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that Heaven
Will blow the tempest in the distance back
From thine and ours; for some are sacred, who mark,
Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm,
Waverings of every vane with every wind,
And wordy trucklings to the transient hour,
And fierce or careless looseners of the faith,
And Softness breeding scorn of simple life,
Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold,
Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice,
Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from France,
And that which knows, but careful for itself,
And that which knows not, ruling that which knows
To its own harm. The goal of this great world
Lies beyond sight; yet — if our slowly-grown
And crowned Republic's crowning common-sense,
That saved her many times, not fail — their fears
Are morning shadows huger than the shapes
That cast them, not those gloomier which forego
The darkness of that battle in the West
Where all of high and holy dies away.

(1872)

## IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

### EMMIE

I

Our doctor had called in another; I never had seen him before,
But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him come in at the door,
Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of other lands —
Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless hands!
Wonderful cures he had done, oh, yes, but they said too of him
He was happier using the knife than in trying to save the limb,
And that I can well believe, for he looked so coarse and so red,
I could think he was one of those who would break their jests on the dead,
And mangle the living dog that had loved him and fawned at his knee —

---

12. **Thunderless lightnings**, cablegrams of congratulation. 14-17. **true North . . . go.** When Manitoba was added to Canada in 1869, many persons in England complained of the cost of maintaining the possessions in America, and suggested that the Canadians might well be left to care for themselves. 20. **Hougoumont**, the Battle of Waterloo. During the battle the Chateau of Hougoumont was occupied by British forces. 35. **one**, Prince Albert, husband of Victoria, to whose memory Tennyson dedicated *The Idylls of the King*. See *Dedication*, page 119. Tennyson places Prince Albert above King Arthur, the "gray king" of line 39. 37. This line expresses the central meaning of *The Idylls of the King*. 41. **cairn and cromlech**, a reference to the followers of the Druids and their places of worship. See *The Holy Grail*, 661 ff., page 144. A cromlech is a stone circle. 42. **Geoffrey**, Geoffrey of Monmouth (12th century), whose *Historia Regum Britanniæ* contains the earliest extended account of the achievements of King Arthur. **Malleor**, Sir Thomas Malory, whose *Morte d'Arthur* (1485) is the chief source of the *Idylls*.

56. **Art . . . France**, a reference to what Tennyson thought the lewdness of contemporary French fiction.

*In the Children's Hospital.* This poem is told by a nurse. The incident is said to be true.

Drenched with the hellish oorali — that ever such things should be!

2

Here was a boy — I am sure that some of our children would die
But for the voice of love, and the smile, and the comforting eye —
Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seemed out of its place —
Caught in a mill and crushed — it was all but a hopeless case;
And he handled him gently enough, but his voice and his face were not kind;
And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it and made up his mind;
And he said to me roughly, "The lad will need little more of your care."
"All the more need," I told him, "to seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
They are all His children here, and I pray for them all as my own."
But he turned to me, "Aye, good woman, can prayer set a broken bone?"
Then he muttered half to himself, but I know that I heard him say,
"All very well — but the good Lord Jesus has had his day."

3

Had? has it come? It has only dawned. It will come by and by.
Oh, how could I serve in the wards if the hope of the world were a lie?
How could I bear with the sights and the loathsome smells of disease
But that He said, "Ye do it to me, when ye do it to these"?

4

So he went. And we passed to this ward where the younger children are laid.
Here is the cot of our orphan, our darling, our meek little maid;
Empty, you see, just now! We have lost her who loved her so much —
Patient of pain though as quick as a sensitive plant to the touch.
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often moved me to tears;
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have found in a child of her years —
Nay, you remember our Emmie; you used to send her the flowers.
How she would smile at 'em, play with 'em, talk to 'em hours after hours!
They that can wander at will where the works of the Lord are revealed
Little guess what joy can be got from a cowslip out of the field;
Flowers to these "spirits in prison" are all they can know of the spring;
They freshen and sweeten the wards like the waft of an angel's wing.
And she lay with a flower in one hand and her thin hands crossed on her breast —
Wan, but as pretty as heart can desire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping — so quiet, our doctor said, "Poor little dear,
Nurse, I must do it tomorrow; she'll never live through it, I fear."

5

I walked with our kindly old doctor as far as the head of the stair,
Then I returned to the ward; the child didn't see I was there.

6

Never since I was nurse had I been so grieved and so vexed!
Emmie had heard him. Softly she called from her cot to the next,
"He says I shall never live through it; O Annie, what shall I do?"
Annie considered. "If I," said the wise little Annie, "was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to help me, for, Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there: 'Little children should come to me' " —
Meaning the print that you gave us; I find that it always can please
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with children about his knees.
"Yes, and I will," said Emmie, "but then if I call to the Lord,
How should he know that it's me? such a lot of beds in the ward!"
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again she considered and said:
"Emmie, you put out your arms, and you leave 'em outside on the bed —
The Lord has so *much* to see to! but, Emmie, you tell it him plain,
It's the little girl with her arms lying out on the counterpane."

7

I had sat three nights by the child — I could not watch her for four —

---

10. **oorali**, a drug used to paralyze the nerves, but which did not affect the senses. When introduced into the blood, it was likely to cause death. 26. **Ye . . . these.** From *Matthew*, 25:40.—"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

50. **Little children**, etc. Adapted from *Mark*, 10:14.—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

My brain had begun to reel — I felt I could do it no more.
That was my sleeping-night, but I thought that it never would pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a clatter of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I heard as I tossed about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the storm and darkness without;
My sleep was broken besides with dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie, who scarce would escape with her life;
Then in the gray of the morning it seemed she stood by me and smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and we went to see the child.

### 8

He had brought his ghastly tools; we believed her asleep again —
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying out on the counterpane —
Say that His day is done! Ah, why should we care what they say?
The Lord of the children had heard her, and Emmie had passed away. (1872)

## THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

The voice and the Peak
Far over summit and lawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn!

All night have I heard the voice
Rave over the rocky bar,
But thou wert silent in heaven,
Above thee glided the star.

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
"I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave, for I fall.

"A thousand voices go
To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are troubled,
And moan and sink to their rest.

"The fields are fair beside them,
The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they — they feel the desire of the deep —
Fall, and follow their doom.

"The deep has power on the height,
And the height has power on the deep;
They are raised forever and ever,
And sink again into sleep."

Not raised forever and ever,
But when their cycle is o'er,
The valley, the voice, the peak, the star
Pass, and are found no more.

The Peak is high and flushed
At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,
And the thought of a man is higher.

A deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight.

The voice and the Peak
Far into heaven withdrawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones of dawn! (1874)

## MONTENEGRO

They rose to where their sovran eagle sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom, on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, armed by day and night
Against the Turk; whose inroad nowhere scales
Their headlong passes, but his footstep fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in prone flight
By thousands down the crags and through the vales.
O smallest among peoples! rough rock-throne
Of Freedom! warriors beating back the swarm
Of Turkish Islam for five hundred years,
Great Tsernogora! Never since thine own
Black ridges drew the cloud and brake the storm
Has breathed a race of mightier mountaineers. (1877)

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*The Voice and the Peak.* The thought of this poem is that the material is transient and that the spiritual is the only real and abiding principle of the universe. The utterance of peak and valley, of sea and star, is that everything of the senses perishes, but beyond the world of sense is a world that endures. See *In Memoriam*, 124, page 88.

2. **lawn**, an open place in a forest.

*Montenegro.* The word means *black mountains.* Montenegro was then the smallest independent state in Europe and the only portion of the Balkan peninsula never really subdued by the Turk. After centuries of warfare, the inhabitants won a decisive victory over Turkey in 1876. In 1918 the country became a part of Jugo-Slavia.

6. **the Crescent**, the emblem of Turkey. 12. **Tsernogora**, the native name for Montenegro.

## THE REVENGE

### A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

1

At Florés in the Azorés Sir Richard Grenville lay,
And a pinnace, like a fluttered bird, came flying from far away:
"Spanish ships of war at sea! We have sighted fifty-three!"
Then sware Lord Thomas Howard: " 'Fore God I am no coward;
But I cannot meet them here, for my ships are out of gear,
And the half my men are sick. I must fly, but follow quick.
We are six ships of the line; can we fight with fifty-three?"

2

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: "I know you are no coward;
You fly them for a moment to fight with them again.
But I've ninety men and more that are lying sick ashore.
I should count myself the coward if I left them, my Lord Howard,
To these Inquisition dogs and the devildoms of Spain."

3

So Lord Howard passed away with five ships of war that day,
Till he melted like a cloud in the silent summer heaven;
But Sir Richard bore in hand all his sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down below;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blessed him in their pain, that they were not left to Spain,
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for the glory of the Lord.

4

He had only a hundred seamen to work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Florés till the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving upon the weather bow.
"Shall we fight or shall we fly?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die!
There'll be little of us left by the time this sun be set."
And Sir Richard said again, "We be all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the children of the devil,
For I never turned my back upon Don or devil yet."

5

Sir Richard spoke and he laughed, and we roared a hurrah, and so
The little *Revenge* ran on sheer into the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck, and her ninety sick below;
For half of their fleet to the right and half to the left were seen,
And the little *Revenge* ran on through the long sea-lane between.

6

Thousands of their soldiers looked down from their decks and laughed,
Thousands of their seamen made mock at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delayed
By their mountain-like *San Philip* that, of fifteen hundred tons,
And up-shadowing high above us with her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and we stayed.

7

And while now the great *San Philip* hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from them all.

8

But anon the great *San Philip*, she bethought herself and went,
Having that within her womb that had left her ill content;
And the rest they came aboard us, and they

---

*The Revenge.* See Critical Notes.

7. **ships of the line.** A ship of line was one large enough to have a place in the line of battle. It carried the heaviest armament. 12. **Inquisition.** The Inquisition was a tribunal of the Roman Catholic Church for the discovery and punishment of heretics and unbelievers. In Spain its proceedings were conducted with notorious cruelty, especially in the 16th century. It was abolished in 1834. 17. **Bideford,** an important seaport on the north coast of Devonshire; the birthplace of Sir Richard Grenville. 21. **thumb-screw . . . the stake.** Torturing by the use of an instrument for compressing the thumb, and burning at the stake were methods employed by the Inquisition.

30. **Seville,** a province in Spain. 31. **Don,** a title in Spain, formerly given only to men of high rank. 40. **San Philip,** the flagship of the Spanish fleet.

fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the land.

9

And the sun went down, and the stars came out far over the summer sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long, their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long, with her battle-thunder and flame;
Ship after ship, the whole night long, drew back with her dead and her shame.
For some were sunk and many were shattered, and so could fight us no more —
God of battles, was ever a battle like this in the world before?

10

For he said, "Fight on! fight on!"
Though his vessel was all but a wreck;
And it chanced that, when half of the short summer night was gone,
With a grisly wound to be dressed he had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was dressing it suddenly dead,
And himself he was wounded again in the side and the head,
And he said, "Fight on! fight on!"

11

And the night went down, and the sun smiled out far over the summer sea,
And the Spanish fleet with broken sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for they feared that we still could sting,
So they watched what the end would be.
And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were slain,
And half of the rest of us maimed for life
In the crash of the cannonades and the desperate strife;
And the sick men down in the hold were most of them stark and cold,
And the pikes were all broken or bent, and the powder was all of it spent;
And the masts and the rigging were lying over the side;
But Sir Richard cried in his English pride,
"We have fought such a fight for a day and a night
As may never be fought again!
We have won great glory, my men!
And a day less or more
At sea or ashore,
We die — does it matter when?
Sink me the ship, Master Gunner — sink her, split her in twain!
Fall into the hands of God, not into the hands of Spain!"

12

And the gunner said, "Aye, aye," but the seamen made reply,
"We have children, we have wives,
And the Lord hath spared our lives.
We will make the Spaniard promise, if we yield, to let us go;
We shall live to fight again and to strike another blow."
And the lion there lay dying, and they yielded to the foe.

13

And the stately Spanish men to their flagship bore him then,
Where they laid him by the mast, old Sir Richard caught at last,
And they praised him to his face with their courtly foreign grace;
But he rose upon their decks, and he cried,
"I have fought for Queen and Faith like a valiant man and true;
I have only done my duty as a man is bound to do.
With a joyful spirit I, Sir Richard Grenville, die!"
And he fell upon their decks, and he died.

14

And they stared at the dead that had been so valiant and true,
And had holden the power and glory of Spain so cheap
That he dared her with one little ship and his English few;
Was he devil or man? He was devil for aught they knew,
But they sank his body with honor down into the deep,
And they manned the *Revenge* with a swarthier alien crew,
And away she sailed with her loss and longed for her own;
When a wind from the lands they had ruined awoke from sleep,
And the water began to heave and the weather to moan,
And or ever that evening ended a great gale blew,
And a wave like the wave that is raised by an earthquake grew,

Till it smote on their hulls and their sails and their masts and their flags,
And the whole sea plunged and fell on the shot-shattered navy of Spain,
And the little *Revenge* herself went down by the island crags
To be lost evermore in the main. (1878)

## RIZPAH

17—

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea —
And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come out to me!"
Why should he call me tonight, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

Anything fallen again? nay — what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have numbered the bones, I have hidden them all.
What am I saying? and what are *you?* Do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you — what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O — to pray with me — yes — a lady — none of their spies —
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

Ah — you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep — you were only made for the day.
I have gathered my baby together — and now you may go your way.

Nay — for it's kind of you, madam, to sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.
I kissed my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said, and he never has told me a lie.
I whipped him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child —
"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he was always so wild —
And idle — and couldn't be idle — my Willy — he never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier; he would have been one of his best.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows — "I'll none of it," said my son.

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth — but they killed him, they killed him for robbing the mail.
They hanged him in chains for a show — we had always borne a good name —
To be hanged for a thief — and then put away — isn't that enough shame?
Dust to dust — low down — let us hide! but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who killed him and hanged him there.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last good-by;
They had fastened the door of his cell. "O mother!" I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back, though I tried; he had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The jailer forced me away.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up; they fastened me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!" — he called in the dark to me year after year —
They beat me for that, they beat me — you know that I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had grown so stupid and still

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*Rizpah.* See Critical Notes.

They let me abroad again — but the creatures had worked their will.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left —
I stole them all from the lawyers — and you, will you call it a theft? —
My baby, the bones that had sucked me, the bones that had laughed and had cried —
Theirs? O, no! they are mine — not theirs — they had moved in my side.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kissed 'em, I buried 'em all —
I can't dig deep, I am old — in the night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy ground.

They would scratch him up — they would hang him again on the cursèd tree.
Sin? O yes, we are sinners, I know — let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's good-will toward men —
"Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord" — let me hear it again;
"Full of compassion and mercy — long-suffering." Yes, O yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder — the Savior lives but to bless.
*He*'ll never put on the black cap except for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last — I have heard it in church — and the last may be first.
Suffering — O long-suffering — yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower and the snow.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm of the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

Election, Election, and Reprobation — it's all very well.
But I go tonight to my boy, and I shall not find him in hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has looked into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

And if *he* be lost — but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire —
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark — go, go, you may leave me alone —
You never have borne a child — you are just as hard as a stone.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind —
The snow and the sky so bright — he used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet — for hark!
Nay — you can hear it yourself — it is coming — shaking the walls —
Willy — the moon's in a cloud — Good-night. I am going. He calls. (1880)

## "FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE"

Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione row!
So they rowed, and there we landed — "O venusta Sirmio!"
There to me through all the groves of olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where the purple flowers grow,
Came that "Ave atque Vale" of the Poet's hopeless woe,
Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen hundred years ago,
"Frater Ave atque Vale" — as we wandered to and fro
Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the Garda Lake below
Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-silvery Sirmio! (*1880;* 1883)

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51. **Flesh . . . bone.** From *Genesis*, 2:23.—"And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'" 58. **holy ground.** Executed persons were denied Christian burial. 62. **Full . . . the Lord.** From *Psalms*, 86:15.—"But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." 65. **the black cap**, worn by an English judge when he passes sentence of death upon a prisoner. 66. **the last may be first.** From *Matthew*, 19:30—"But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

73. **Election . . . Reprobation**, a reference to the belief that some persons are elected to be saved and others lost, regardless of personal character.

*Frater Ave Atque Vale.* The title, *Brother, Hail and Farewell*, is quoted from a lament of the Roman poet Catullus (1st cent.) for his brother. Tennyson visited Italy in 1880.

1. **Desenzano**, a town on Lake Garda in northern Italy, just west of Sirmione, a narrow peninsula, where Catullus lived. 2. **O venusta Sirmio**, O beautiful Sirmio; quoted from Catullus. 8. **Lydian.** The Etruscans, who settled near Lake Garda, were supposed to be of Lydian origin.

## TO VIRGIL

### WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE MANTUANS FOR THE NINETEENTH CENTENARY OF VIRGIL'S DEATH

Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising, wars, and filial faith, and Dido's pyre;

Landscape-lover, lord of language more than he that sang the "Works and Days,"
All the chosen coin of fancy flashing out from many a golden phrase;

Thou that singest wheat and woodland, tilth and vineyard, hive and horse and herd;
All the charm of all the Muses often flowering in a lonely word;

Poet of the happy Tityrus piping underneath his beechen bowers;
Poet of the poet-satyr whom the laughing shepherd bound with flowers;

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow, unlaborious earth and oarless sea;

Thou that seest Universal Nature moved by Universal Mind;
Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind;

Light among the vanished ages; star that gildest yet this phantom shore;
Golden branch amid the shadows, kings and realms that pass to rise no more;

Now thy Forum roars no longer, fallen every purple Cæsar's dome —
Though thine ocean-roll of rhythm sound forever of Imperial Rome —

Now the Rome of slaves hath perished, and the Rome of freemen holds her place,
I, from out the Northern Island sundered once from all the human race,

I salute thee, Mantovano, I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure ever molded by the lips of man.

(1882)

*To Virgil.* Virgil was born in Mantua, Italy. He died in 19 B.C. The poem is full of allusions to his works.

1-2. This stanza refers to the chief incidents in Virgil's *Æneid*—the burning of Troy (Ilion) and the death of Dido in Carthage when Æneas left her. 3. **Works and Days,** the title of a poem by Hesiod, a Greek poet of the 8th century B.C. 5-6. This stanza mentions themes of Virgil's *Georgics*. 7. **Tityrus,** a shepherd in Virgil's first *Eclogue*. 8. **poet-satyr . . . flowers,** an incident in the sixth *Eclogue*. 9. **Pollio,** C. Asinius Pollio, a patron of Virgil, mentioned in the fourth *Eclogue*. 11-14. These lines contain echoes of the sixth book of the *Æneid*. 15. **Forum,** the famous market place of ancient Rome, used for popular assemblies. **purple,** the color and symbol of authority. The Cæsars ruled during the first century B.C.

## FREEDOM

O thou so fair in summers gone,
While yet thy fresh and virgin soul
Informed the pillared Parthenon,
The glittering Capitol;

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,
But scarce of such majestic mien
As here with forehead vapor-swathed
In meadows ever green;

For thou — when Athens reigned and Rome,
Thy glorious eyes were dimmed with pain
To mark in many a freeman's home
The slave, the scourge, the chain;

O follower of the Vision, still
In motion to the distant gleam
Howe'er blind force and brainless will
May jar thy golden dream

Of Knowledge fusing class with class,
Of civic Hate no more to be,
Of Love to leaven all the mass,
Till every soul be free;

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not mar
By changes all too fierce and fast
This order of her Human Star,
This heritage of the past;

O scorner of the party cry
That wanders from the public good,
Thou — when the nations rear on high
Their idol smeared with blood,

And when they roll their idol down —
Of saner worship sanely proud;
Thou loather of the lawless crown
As of the lawless crowd;

How long thine ever-growing mind
Hath stilled the blast and strown the wave,
Though some of late would raise a wind
To sing thee to thy grave,

*Freedom.* This poem expresses Tennyson's favorite political creed—that changes and reforms should be made gradually. Cf. *Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights*, page 35, and *The Poet*, page 16.

3. **Parthenon,** a celebrated temple built in Athens, Greece, during the 5th century B.C. 4. **Capitol,** the temple of Jupiter at Rome. 12. **The slave . . . chain.** Slavery held sway in Greece and Rome for more than a thousand years.

Men loud against all forms of power —
Unfurnished brows, tempestuous tongues,
Expecting all things in an hour —
Brass mouths and iron lungs!
(1884)

## VASTNESS

Many a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after many a vanished face,
Many a planet by many a sun may roll with the dust of a vanished race.

Raving politics, never at rest — as this poor earth's pale history runs —
What is it all but a trouble of ants in the gleam of a million million of suns?

Lies upon this side, lies upon that side, truthless violence mourned by the wise,
Thousands of voices drowning his own in a popular torrent of lies upon lies;

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glorious annals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for the wrong cause, trumpets of victory, groans of defeat;

Innocence seethed in her mother's milk, and Charity setting the martyr aflame;
Thraldom who walks with the banner of Freedom, and recks not to ruin a realm in her name.

Faith at her zenith, or all but lost in the gloom of doubts that darken the schools;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her hand, followed up by her vassal legion of fools;

Trade flying over a thousand seas with her spice and her vintage, her silk and her corn;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors, famishing populace, wharves forlorn;

Star of the morning, Hope in the sunrise; Gloom of the evening, Life at a close;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide downway with her flying robe and her poisoned rose;

Pain, that has crawled from the corpse of Pleasure, a worm which writhes all day, and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the sleeper, and stings him back to the curse of the light;

Wealth with his wines and his wedded harlots; honest Poverty, bare to the bone;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty; Flattery gilding the rift in a throne;

Fame blowing out from her golden trumpet a jubilant challenge to Time and to Fate;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle on all the laureled graves of the great;

Love for the maiden, crowned with marriage, no regrets for aught that has been,
Household happiness, gracious children, debtless competence, golden mean;

National hatreds of whole generations, and pigmy spites of the village spire;
Vows that will last to the last death-ruckle, and vows that are snapped in a moment of fire;

He that has lived for the lust of the minute, and died in the doing it, flesh without mind;
He that has nailed all flesh to the Cross, till Self died out in the love of his kind;

Spring and Summer and Autumn and Winter, and all these old revolutions of earth;
All new-old revolutions of Empire — change of the tide — what is all of it worth?

What the philosophies, all the sciences, poesy, varying voices of prayer,
All that is noblest, all that is basest, all that is filthy with all that is fair?

What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own corpse-coffins at last?
Swallowed in Vastness, lost in Silence, drowned in the deeps of a meaningless Past?

What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a moment's anger of bees in their hive? —

. . . . . . . .

Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and love him forever; the dead are not dead but alive.
(1885)

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*Vastness.* See Critical Notes.
12. **all-heal.** Many plants are so called from their supposed medicinal power. 13. **Corn,** grain, wheat.

26. **death-ruckle,** a rattling sound sometimes produced in the throat of a dying person. 28. **He . . . Cross.** From *Galatians,* 5:24.—"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." 36. Originally this line was represented as spoken by another person in answer to the question in line 35. If the line is spoken by the poet, *him* may refer to Arthur Hallam.

## LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

Late, my grandson! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts,
Watched again the hollow ridges roaring into cataracts,

Wandered back to living boyhood while I heard the curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death itself in Locksley Hall.

So — your happy suit was blasted — she the faultless, the divine;
And you liken — boyish babble — this boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless of a foolish past;
Babble, babble; our old England may go down in babble at last.

"Curse him!" curse your fellow-victim? call him dotard in your rage?
Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier? yet perhaps she was not wise;
I remember how you kissed the miniature with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting — Amy's arms about my neck —
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that clasped my neck had flown;
I was left within the shadow sitting on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment; will you sicken for her sake?
You, not you! your modern amorist is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy failed me, Amy was a timid child;
But your Judith — but your worldling — *she* had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer than the golden ring,
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than a morn of spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his briefer lease of life,
While she vows "till death shall part us," she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings — father, mother — be content,
Even the homely farm can teach us there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking now into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with his feet upon the hound.

Crossed! for once he sailed the sea to crush the Moslem in his pride;
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead the cause in which he died.

Yet how often I and Amy in the moldering aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on that founder of our blood.

There again I stood today, and where of old we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson with the shield of Locksley — there,

All in white Italian marble, looking still as if she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead the mother, dead the child.

Dead — and sixty years ago, and dead her aged husband now —
I, this old white-headed dreamer, stooped and kissed her marble brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies, furies, curses, passionate tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earthquakes of the planet's dawning years—

Fires that shook me once, but now to silent ashes fallen away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and mute below the chancel stones,
All his virtues — I forgive them — black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac, some in fight against the foe,
Some through age and slow diseases, gone as all on earth will go.

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*Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.* This poem is a sequel to *Locksley Hall*, page 45. The young lover has become an old man 80 years of age.

29. **he . . . pride.** This means that he had been a Crusader against the Turk (Moslem).

Gone with whom for forty years my life in golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,
She that linked again the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Here today was Amy with me, while I wandered down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard early lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once had beat beside her own.

Truth, for truth is truth, he worshiped, being true as he was brave;
Good, for good is good, he followed, yet he looked beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the death, but kept the deck,
Saving women and their babes, and sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone forever! Ever? No — for since our dying race began,
Ever, ever, and forever was the leading light of man.

Those that in barbarian burials killed the slave, and slew the wife,
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunting grounds beyond the night;
Even the black Australian dying hopes he shall return, a white.

Truth for truth, and good for good! The good, the true, the pure, the just —
Take the charm "Forever" from them, and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of "Forward, Forward," lost within a growing gloom;
Lost, or only heard in silence from the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space,
Staled by frequence, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!

"Forward" rang the voices then, and of the many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of "Forward" till ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanished races, old Assyrian kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle — iron-hearted victors they.

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led the wild Moguls,
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty thousand human skulls;

Then, and here in Edward's time, an age of noblest English names,
Christian conquerors took and flung the conquered Christian into flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters, said the Greatest of the great;
Christian love among the Churches looked the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man had coined himself a curse:
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which was crueller? which was worse?

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79-80. **Assyrian . . . Captives.** The Assyrian kings were notably cruel to their captives. 82. **Timur,** Tamerlane, a famous Mongolian conqueror notorious for his atrocities. In 1398 he sacked Delhi, India, and is said to have put to death 100,000 prisoners. (See *Maud*, 46, page 97.) 83-84. These lines refer to the religious persecutions in England of the sovereigns immediately following Henry VIII. Edward V was crowned in 1547. 85. **Love . . . great,** a reference to Christ's saying, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (*Matthew*, 5:44). 88. **Rome of Cæsar.** During the first century pagan Rome, especially under Nero, persecuted and killed great numbers of Christians. **Rome of Peter,** the See of St. Peter, at Rome. Religious persecutions were common among all medieval peoples. Tennyson, the Protestant, here fixes his attention upon the treatment of heretics by Roman Catholics.

France had shown a light to all men, preached a Gospel, all men's good;
Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shrieked and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain, watching till the day begun —
Crowned with sunlight — over darkness — from the still unrisen sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the passions of the primal clan?
"Kill your enemy, for you hate him," still, "your enemy" was a man.

Have we sunk below them? Peasants maim the helpless horse, and drive
Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your wrongers — burned at midnight, found at morn,
Twisted hard in mortal agony with their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother! Are we devils? are we men?
Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again,

He that in his Catholic wholeness used to call the very flowers
Sisters, brothers — and the beasts — whose pains are hardly less than ours!

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can tell how all will end?
Read the wide world's annals, you, and take their wisdom for your friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past,
Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last.

Aye, if dynamite and revolver leave you courage to be wise —
When was age so crammed with menace? madness? written, spoken lies?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and, laughing sober fact to scorn,
Cries to weakest as to strongest, "Ye are equals, equal-born."

Equal-born? Oh, yes, if yonder hill be level with the flat.
Charm us, orator, till the lion look no larger than the cat,

Till the cat through that mirage of overheated language loom
Larger than the lion — Demos end in working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier; shall we fight her? shall we yield?
Pause! before you sound the trumpet, hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under one Imperial scepter now,
Shall we hold them? shall we loose them? take the suffrage of the plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow Truth if only you and you,
Rivals of realm-ruining party, when you speak were wholly true.

Plowmen, shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practiced hustings-liar;
So the higher wields the lower, while the lower is the higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal-born by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again the sickening game;
Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying while they shout her name.

Step by step we gained a freedom known to Europe, known to all;
Step by step we rose to greatness — through the tonguesters we may fall.

You that woo the Voices — tell them "old experience is a fool,"

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89-90. These lines refer to the French Revolution and to the Reign of Terror, 1793-94, during which hundreds were sent to the guillotine. The doctrine of the Revolution was "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." *Demos* is a Greek word meaning *people*. 95-96. **Peasants . . . alive**, a reference to incidents attendant on the agricultural disturbances of the time. 100. **Saint Francis of Assisi**, an Italian monk (1182-1226) noted for his gentleness and nobility of character. 103. **Chaos, Cosmos.** Tennyson here refers to the conflict between those who see no meaning in life and those who see an ordered purpose in it.

115. **Russia . . . yield**, a reference to Russia's persistent efforts during the 19th century to gain control of Afghanistan, the "Indian barrier." In 1877-78 Russia sent an expedition through the Balkans to Constantinople, and England promptly sent a fleet in opposition. 116. **voices from the field**, voices of the laboring classes. 123. **hustings**, the platform from which the candidates for Parliament addressed the electors. 131. **the Voices**, the approval of the masses.

Teach your flattered kings that only those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but set no meek ones in their place;
Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and, yelling with the yelling street,
Set the feet above the brain and swear the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without the faith, without the hope,
Break the State, the Church, the Throne, and roll their ruins down the slope.

Authors — essayist, atheist, novelist, realist, rimester, play your part,
Paint the mortal shame of nature with the living hues of art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your own foul passions bare;
Down with Reticence, down with Reverence — forward — naked — let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the drainage of your sewer;
Send the drain into the fountain, lest the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the troughs of Zolaism —
Forward, forward, aye, and backward, downward too into the abysm!

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower the rising race of men;
Have we risen from out the beast, then back into the beast again?

Only "dust to dust" for me that sicken at your lawless din,
Dust in wholesome old-world dust before the the newer world begin.

Heated am I? you — you wonder — well, it scarce becomes mine age —
Patience! let the dying actor mouth his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the dotard fall asleep?
Noises of a current narrowing, not the music of a deep?

Aye, for doubtless I am old, and think gray thoughts, for I am gray;
After all the stormy changes shall we find a changeless May?

After madness, after massacre, Jacobinism and Jacquerie,
Some diviner force to guide us through the days I shall not see?

When the schemes and all the systems, kingdoms and republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier — all for each and each for all?

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led by Justice, Love, and Truth;
All the millions one at length with all the visions of my youth?

All diseases quenched by Science, no man halt, or deaf, or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier body, larger mind?

Earth at last a warless world, a single race, a single tongue —
I have seen her far away — for is not Earth as yet so young? —

Every tiger madness muzzled, every serpent passion killed,
Every grim ravine a garden, every blazing desert tilled,

Robed in universal harvest up to either pole she smiles,
Universal ocean softly washing all her warless isles.

Warless? when her tens are thousands, and her thousands millions, then —
All her harvest all too narrow — who can fancy warless men?

Warless? war will die out late then. Will it ever? late or soon?
Can it, till this outworn earth be dead as yon dead world the moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. — On this day and at this hour,
In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,

---

139-150. These lines show Tennyson's dislike of the realistic novels of the period. Zola (line 145) was a contemporary French realist.

157. **Jacobinism, Jacquerie,** mad opposition to regular government. The Jacobins were a society of violent radicals in France during the Revolution of 1789. Under the leadership of Robespierre, they conducted the "Reign of Terror." The Jacquerie was a revolt of French peasants in 1358 because of the oppressions of the nobles.

Here we met, our latest meeting — Amy — sixty years ago —
She and I — the moon was falling greenish through a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and even where you see her now —
Here we stood and clasped each other, swore the seeming-deathless vow. —

Dead, but how her living glory lights the hall, the dune, the grass!
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at this earthlier earth of ours,
Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet called the Bringer home of all good things —
All good things may move in Hesper, perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper — Venus — were we native to that splendor or in Mars,
We should see the globe we groan in, fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage, craft and madness, lust and spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that point of peaceful light?

Might we not in glancing heavenward on a star so silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and murmur, "Would to God that we were there"?

Forward, backward, backward, forward, in the immeasurable sea,
Swayed by vaster ebbs and flows than can be known to you or me.

All the suns — are these but symbols of innumerable man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in every peopled sphere?
Well, be grateful for the sounding watchword "Evolution" here,

Evolution ever climbing after some ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolution in the mud.

What are men that He should heed us? cried the king of sacred song;
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother insect wrong,

While the silent heavens roll, and suns along their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million miles a day.

Many an æon molded earth before her highest, man, was born,
Many an æon too may pass when earth is manless and forlorn,

Earth so huge, and yet so bounded — pools of salt, and plots of land —
Shallow skin of green and azure — chains of mountain, grains of sand!

Only That which made us meant us to be mightier by and by,
Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, through the human soul;
Boundless inward in the atom, boundless outward in the Whole.

. . . . .

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson, here the lion-guarded gate.
Not tonight in Locksley Hall — tomorrow — you, you come so late.

Wrecked — your train — or all but wrecked? a shattered wheel? a vicious boy!
Good, this forward, you that preach it, is it well to wish you joy?

Is it well that while we range with Science, glorying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul and sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the thousand on the street.

There the master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,

---

182. **the sun . . . pass.** It is believed that the sun is slowly diminishing. 185. **Hesper,** another name for Venus as the evening star. **the poet,** Homer. 199. **Evolution,** etc. Cf. *By an Evolutionist,* page 164, and *Sea Dreams,* lines 201 ff. 201. **What are men,** etc. Based on *Psalms,* 8:4.—"What is man that thou art mindful of him?" **king . . . song,** David.

There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.

There the smoldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your "Forward," yours are hope and youth, but I —
Eighty winters leave the dog too lame to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and passing now into the night;
Yet I would the rising race were half as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of even? light the glimmer of the dawn?
Aged eyes may take the growing glimmer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes earth will be
Something other than the wildest modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if she gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring this ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the course of Time will swerve,
Crook and turn upon itself in many a backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall tonight, my grandson! Death and Silence hold their own.
Leave the master in the first dark hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound and honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion — youthful jealousy is a liar.

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust the madness from your brain.
Let the trampled serpent show you that you have not lived in vain.

Youthful! youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village — Art and Grace are less and less;
Science grows and Beauty dwindles — roofs of slated hideousness!

There is one old hostel left us where they swing the Locksley shield,
Till the peasant cow shall butt the "lion passant" from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History, poor old Poetry, passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old political common-sense!

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that have fled!
All I loved are vanished voices, all my steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of eighty years.

• • • • •

In this hostel — I remember — I repent it o'er his grave —
Like a clown — by chance he met me — I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer mantles all the moldering bricks —
I was then in early boyhood, Edith but a child of six —

While I sheltered in this archway from a day of driving showers —
Peeped the winsome face of Edith like a flower among the flowers.

Here tonight! the Hall tomorrow, when they toll the chapel bell!
Shall I hear in one dark room a wailing, "I have loved thee well"?

Then a peal that shakes the portal — one has come to claim his bride,
Her that shrank, and put me from her, shrieked, and started from my side —

Silent echoes! You, my Leonard, use and not abuse your day,
Move among your people, know them, follow him who led the way,

---

224. **In the warrens of the poor**, a reference to the crowding of the families of the poor into small quarters. A warren is a protected piece of ground for the breeding of rabbits.

Strove for sixty widowed years to help his homelier brother men,
Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised the school, and drained the fen.

Hears he now the voice that wronged him? who shall swear it cannot be?
Earth would never touch her worst, were one in fifty such as he.

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a god must mingle with the game.
Nay, there may be those about us whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the fountains of the will.

Follow you the star that lights a desert pathway, yours or mine.
Forward, till you see the Highest Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right — for man can half-control his doom —
Till you find the deathless Angel seated in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and mingle with the past.
I that loathed have come to love him. Love will conquer at the last.

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I and you will bear the pall;
Then I leave thee lord and master, latest lord of Locksley Hall. (1886)

## MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

1

O young Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
*I* am Merlin,
And *I* am dying,
*I* am Merlin
Who follow the Gleam.

2

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learned me Magic!
Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated the Gleam.

3

Once at the croak of a Raven who crossed it,
A barbarous people,
Blind to the magic
And deaf to the melody,
Snarled at and cursed me.
A demon vexed me,
The light retreated,
The landskip darkened,
The melody deadened,
The Master whispered,
"Follow the Gleam."

4

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted the Gleam.

---

278. **the deathless Angel . . . tomb.** The story of the angel who rolled away the stone from the tomb of Christ is told in all the Gospels. See *Matthew*, 28:1-7.

*Merlin and the Gleam.* Merlin was the magician of Arthur's court. The poem is an allegory of Tennyson's poetical career. Merlin is Tennyson; the Gleam is "the higher poetic imagination."

*Stanza 2.* This stanza refers to Tennyson's early poetry, as in the 1827 volume.

*Stanza 3.* This stanza refers to the hostility of reviewers of the 1830 volume of poems and to the period of Tennyson's silence from 1833 to 1842. The "Raven" of line 24 may refer to Christopher North (John Wilson), whose criticism appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1832. The following poem by Tennyson appeared in the volume of 1832:

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH

You did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame and praise,
Rusty Christopher.
When I learnt from whom it came
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher.

*Stanza 4.* This stanza refers to the period of imaginative poems, as found in the 1842 volume.

5

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labor,
Slided the Gleam —

6

Then, with a melody
Stronger and statelier,
Led me at length
To the city and palace
Of Arthur the King;
Touched at the golden
Cross of the churches,
Flashed on the tournament,
Flickered and bickered
From helmet to helmet,
And last on the forehead
Of Arthur the blameless
Rested the Gleam.

7

Clouds and darkness
Closed upon Camelot;
Arthur had vanished
I knew not whither,
The king who loved me,
And cannot die;
For out of the darkness
Silent and slowly
The Gleam, that had waned to a wintry glimmer
On icy fallow
And faded forest,
Drew to the valley
Named of the shadow,
And slowly brightening
Out of the glimmer,
And slowly moving again to a melody
Yearningly tender,
Fell on the shadow,
No longer a shadow,
But clothed with the Gleam.

8

And broader and brighter
The Gleam flying onward,
Wed to the melody,
Sang through the world;
And slower and fainter,
Old and weary,
But eager to follow,
I saw, whenever
In passing it glanced upon
Hamlet or city,
That under the Crosses
The dead man's garden,
The mortal hillock,
Would break into blossom;
And so to the land's
Last limit I came —
And can no longer,
But die rejoicing,
For through the Magic
Of Him the Mighty,
Who taught me in childhood,
There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers the Gleam.

9

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!
O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it,
Follow the Gleam.
(1889)

## BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
And the Lord — "Not yet; but make it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better."

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul uncertain or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses while the sun of morning shines,

---

*Stanza 5.* This stanza refers to the period of pastorals and English idylls, as found in the 1842 volume.

*Stanza 6.* This stanza refers to *The Idylls of the King.*

*Stanza 7.* This stanza refers to the experiences related in *In Memoriam.*

87. **the shadow.** Cf. *Psalms,* 23:4.—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil."

*Stanza 8.* This stanza refers to later poetic activity.

*By an Evolutionist.* Cf. *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After,* 199, page 161, and Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra,* page 280.

I, the finer brute rejoicing in my hounds, and in my stable,
  Youth and health, and birth and wealth, and choice of women and of wines?

2

What hast thou done for me, grim Old Age, save breaking my bones on the rack?
  Would I had passed in the morning that looks so bright from afar!

*Old Age*

Done for thee? starved the wild beast that was linked with thee eighty years back.
  Less weight now for the ladder-of-heaven that hangs on a star.

1

If my body come from brutes, though somewhat finer than their own,
  I am heir, and this my kingdom. Shall the royal voice be mute?
No, but if the rebel subject seek to drag me from the throne,
  Hold the scepter, Human Soul, and rule thy province of the brute.

2

I have climbed to the snows of Age, and I gaze at a field in the Past,
  Where I sank with the body at times in the sloughs of a low desire,
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and the Man is quiet at last,
  As he stands on the heights of his life with a glimpse of a height that is higher.
(1889)

## FAR — FAR — AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

What sight so lured him through the fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
    Far — far — away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
    Far — far — away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
Through those three words would haunt him when a boy,
    Far — far — away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
    Far — far — away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
    Far — far — away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you live
    Far — far — away? (1889)

## THE THROSTLE

"Summer is coming, summer is coming.
  I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again, love again!"
  Yes, my wild little Poet.

Sing the new year in under the blue.
  Last year you sang it as gladly.
"New, new, new, new!" Is it then *so* new
  That you should carol so madly?

"Love again, song again, nest again, young again,"
  Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
  See, there is hardly a daisy.

"Here again, here, here, here, happy year!"
  O warble unchidden, unbidden!
Summer is coming, is coming, my dear,
  And all the winters are hidden. (1889)

## THE OAK

Live thy Life,
  Young and old,
Like yon oak,
Bright in spring,
  Living gold;

Summer-rich
  Then; and then
Autumn-changed,
Soberer-hued
  Gold again.

All his leaves
  Fallen at length,
Look, he stands,
Trunk and bough,
  Naked strength. (1889)

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*Far—Far—Away.* Compare this poem with *Tears, Idle Tears*, page 55.

*The Throstle.* In this poem Tennyson sets words to the music of the song thrush. Cf. *O Swallow, Swallow*, page 55, and Swinburne's *Itylus*, page 675.

## JUNE BRACKEN AND HEATHER

TO ——

There on the top of the down,
The wild heather round me and over me June's high blue,
When I looked at the bracken so bright and the heather so brown,
I thought to myself I would offer this book to you,
This, and my love together,
To you that are seventy-seven,
With a faith as clear as the heights of the June-blue heaven,
And a fancy as summer-new
As the green of the bracken amid the gloom of the heather. (1892)

## From AKBAR'S DREAM

### HYMN

Once again thou flamest heavenward, once again we see thee rise.
Every morning is thy birthday gladdening human hearts and eyes.
Every morning here we greet it, bowing lowly down before thee,
Thee the Godlike, thee the changeless in thine ever-changing skies.

Shadow-maker, shadow-slayer, arrowing light from clime to clime,
Hear thy myriad laureates hail thee monarch in their woodland rime.
Warble bird, and open flower, and, men, below the dome of azure
Kneel adoring Him the Timeless in the flame that measures Time! (1892)

## CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.
(1889)

## ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

## From PARACELSUS

### HEAP CASSIA, SANDAL-BUDS, AND STRIPES

Heap cassia, sandal-buds, and stripes
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls,
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
From out her hair; such balsam falls
Down sea-side mountain pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,
Spent with the vast and howling main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

And strew faint sweetness from some old
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
From closet long to quiet vowed,
With mothed and dropping arras hung,
Moldering her lute and books among,
As when a queen, long dead, was young.

### OVER THE SEA OUR GALLEYS WENT

Over the sea our galleys went,
With cleaving prows in order brave
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave —
A gallant armament;
Each bark built out of a forest-tree
Left leafy and rough as first it grew,
And nailed all over the gaping sides,
Within and without, with black bull-hides,
Seethed in fat and suppled in flame,
To bear the playful billows' game;
So, each good ship was rude to see,
Rude and bare to the outward view,
But each upbore a stately tent

*June Bracken and Heather.* This poem is the dedication to Tennyson's last volume of poetry, *The Death of Œnone and Other Poems.* It is addressed to his wife. Cf. *A Dedication,* page 114.

*Akbar's Dream.* See Critical Notes.

*Crossing the Bar.* A few days before he died, Tennyson gave instructions that this lyric should be put at the end of all editions of his poems

*Paracelsus.* See Critical Notes.

*Heap Cassia.* The items mentioned in this poem are noted for their fragrance. They have long been associated in poetry. 4. **balsam,** fragrance, balm. 5. **mountain pedestals,** cliffs.

12. **shredded,** a transferred epithet; it applies to *arras,* line 14

*Over The Sea.* See Critical Notes.

Where cedar pales in scented row
Kept out the flakes of the dancing brine,
And an awning drooped the mast below,
In fold on fold of the purple fine,
That neither noontide nor starshine
Nor moonlight cold which maketh mad,
Might pierce the regal tenement.
When the sun dawned, oh, gay and glad
We set the sail and plied the oar;
But when the night-wind blew like breath,
For joy of one day's voyage more,
We sang together on the wide sea,
Like men at peace on a peaceful shore;
Each sail was loosed to the wind so free,
Each helm made sure by the twilight star,
And in a sleep as calm as death,
We, the voyagers from afar,
Lay stretched along, each weary crew
In a circle round its wondrous tent
Whence gleamed soft light and curled rich scent,
And with light and perfume, music, too.
So the stars wheeled round, and the darkness past,
And at morn we started beside the mast,
And still each ship was sailing fast.

Now, one morn, land appeared — a speck
Dim trembling betwixt sea and sky —
"Avoid it," cried our pilot, "check
The shout, restrain the eager eye!"
But the heaving sea was black behind
For many a night and many a day,
And land, though but a rock, drew nigh;
So, we broke the cedar pales away,
Let the purple awning flap in the wind,
And a statue bright was on every deck!
We shouted, every man of us,
And steered right into the harbor thus,
With pomp and pæan glorious.

A hundred shapes of lucid stone!
All day we built its shrine for each,
A shrine of rock for every one,
Nor paused till in the westering sun
We sat together on the beach
To sing because our task was done.
When lo! what shouts and merry songs!
What laughter all the distance stirs!
A loaded raft with happy throngs
Of gentle islanders!
"Our isles are just at hand," they cried,
"Like cloudlets faint in even sleeping.
Our temple-gates are opened wide,
Our olive-groves thick shade are keeping
For these majestic forms" — they cried.
Oh, then we awoke with sudden start
From our deep dream, and knew, too late,
How bare the rock, how desolate,
Which had received our precious freight;
Yet we called out — "Depart!
Our gifts, once given, must here abide.
Our work is done; we have no heart
To mar our work" — we cried.

### Thus the Mayne Glideth

Thus the Mayne glideth
Where my Love abideth.
Sleep's no softer; it proceeds
On through lawns, on through meads,
On and on, whate'er befall,
Meandering and musical,
Though the niggard pasturage
Bears not on its shaven ledge
Aught but weeds and waving grasses
To view the river as it passes,
Save here and there a scanty patch
Of primroses too faint to catch
A weary bee. And scarce it pushes
Its gentle way through strangling rushes
Where the glossy kingfisher
Flutters when noon-heats are near,
Glad the shelving banks to shun,
Red and steaming in the sun,
Where the shrew-mouse with pale throat
Burrows, and the speckled stoat;
Where the quick sandpipers flit
In and out the marl and grit
That seems to breed them, brown as they.
Naught disturbs its quiet way,
Save some lazy stork that springs,
Trailing it with legs and wings,
Whom the shy fox from the hill
Rouses, creep he ne'er so still. (1835)

## PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

The rain set early in tonight;
The sullen wind was soon awake —
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake.
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied

---

**19. moonlight . . . mad.** The moon was long thought to cause madness.

*Thus the Mayne Glideth.* The Mayne River is a tributary of the Rhine. See Critical Notes.

4. **lawns,** open spaces in the woods. 20. **speckled stoat,** ermine. 22. **marl and grit,** earth and sand.

*Porphyria's Lover.* This poem, together with the one following, first appeared under the title *Madhouse Cells.* It is the earliest of Browning's dramatic monologues.

Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me — she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavor,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me forever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain;
So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshiped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.
That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good; I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily oped her lids; again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss.
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still —
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love — she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word! (1836)

## JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDITATION

There's heaven above, and night by night
I look right through its gorgeous roof;
No suns and moons though e'er so bright
Avail to stop me; splendor-proof
I keep the broods of stars aloof.
For I intend to get to God,
For 'tis to God I speed so fast,
For in God's breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory, passed,
I lay my spirit down at last.
I lie where I have always lain,
God smiles as he has always smiled;
Ere suns and moons could wax and wane,
Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled
The heavens, God thought on me his child;
Ordained a life for me, arrayed
Its circumstances every one
To the minutest; aye, God said
This head this hand should rest upon
Thus, ere he fashioned star or sun.
And having thus created me,
Thus rooted me, he bade me grow,
Guiltless forever, like a tree
That buds and blooms, nor seeks to know
The law by which it prospers so.
But sure that thought and word and deed
All go to swell his love for me,
Me, made because that love had need
Of something irreversibly
Pledged solely its content to be.
Yes, yes, a tree which must ascend,
No poison-gourd foredoomed to stoop!
I have God's warrant, could I blend
All hideous sins, as in a cup,
To drink the mingled venoms up;
Secure my nature will convert
The draft to blossoming gladness fast;
While sweet dews turn to the gourd's hurt,
And bloat, and while they bloat it, blast,
As from the first its lot was cast.
For as I lie, smiled on, full-fed
By unexhausted power to bless,
I gaze below on hell's fierce bed,
And those its waves of flame oppress,
Swarming in ghastly wretchedness;
Whose life on earth aspired to be
One altar-smoke, so pure! — to win
If not love like God's love for me,
At least to keep his anger in;
And all their striving turned to sin.
Priest, doctor, hermit, monk grown white
With prayer, the broken-hearted nun,
The martyr, the wan acolyte,
The incense-swinging child — undone
Before God fashioned star or sun!
God, whom I praise; how could I praise,
If such as I might understand,
Make out and reckon on his ways,
And bargain for his love, and stand,
Paying a price, at his right hand? (1836)

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*Johannes Agricola in Meditation.* Johannes Agricola, a German reformer of the 16th century, was the reputed founder of the Antinomians, a sect of Christians who held that the moral law is of no value or force on the ground that faith only is necessary to salvation.

53. **acolyte,** one who carries the wine, the water, and the lights at the Mass.

# PIPPA PASSES

### A DRAMA

## PERSONS

Pippa
Ottima
Sebald
Foreign Students
Gottlieb
Schramm
Jules
Phene
Austrian Police
Bluphocks
Luigi and his mother
Poor Girls
Monsignor and his attendants

## INTRODUCTION

### NEW YEAR'S DAY AT ASOLO IN THE TREVISAN

Scene: *A large mean airy chamber. A girl,* Pippa, *from the silk-mills, springing out of bed.*

Day!
Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurting and suppressed it lay,
For not a froth-flake touched the rim
Of yonder gap in the solid gray
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away;
But forth one wavelet, then another, curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then overflowed the world.

O Day, if I squander a wavelet of thee,
A mite of my twelve-hours' treasure,
The least of thy gazes or glances
(Be they grants thou art bound to or gifts above measure),
One of thy choices or one of thy chances
(Be they tasks God imposed thee or freaks at thy pleasure)
— My Day, if I squander such labor or leisure,
Then shame fall on Asolo, mischief on me!

Thy long blue solemn hours serenely flowing,
Whence earth, we feel, gets steady help and good —
Thy fitful sunshine-minutes, coming, going,
As if earth turned from work in gamesome mood —
All shall be mine! But thou must treat me not
As prosperous ones are treated, those who live
At hand here, and enjoy the higher lot,
In readiness to take what thou wilt give,
And free to let alone what thou refusest;
For, Day, my holiday, if thou ill-usest
Me, who am only Pippa — old-year's sorrow,
Cast off last night, will come again tomorrow;
Whereas, if thou prove gentle, I shall borrow
Sufficient strength of thee for new-year's sorrow.
All other men and women that this earth
Belongs to, who all days alike possess,
Make general plenty cure particular dearth,
Get more joy one way, if another, less;
Thou art my single day, God lends to leaven
What were all earth else, with a feel of heaven —
Sole light that helps me through the year, thy sun's!
Try now! Take Asolo's Four Happiest Ones —
And let thy morning rain on that superb
Great haughty Ottima; can rain disturb
Her Sebald's homage? All the while thy rain
Beats fiercest on her shrub-house window-pane,
He will but press the closer, breathe more warm
Against her cheek; how should she mind the storm?
And, morning past, if mid-day shed a gloom
O'er Jules and Phene — what care bride and groom
Save for their dear selves? 'Tis their marriage-day;
And while they leave church and go home their way,
Hand clasping hand, within each breast would be
Sunbeams and pleasant weather spite of thee.
Then, for another trial, obscure thy eve
With mist—will Luigi and his mother grieve—
The lady and her child, unmatched, forsooth,
She in her age, as Luigi in his youth,
For true content? The cheerful town, warm, close
And safe, the sooner that thou art morose,
Receives them. And yet once again, outbreak
In storm at night on Monsignor, they make
Such stir about — whom they expect from Rome
To visit Asolo, his brothers' home,
And say here masses proper to release
A soul from pain — what storm dares hurt his peace?
Calm would he pray, with his own thoughts to ward
Thy thunder off, nor want the angels' guard.
But Pippa — just one such mischance would spoil
Her day that lightens the next twelvemonth's toil
At wearisome silk-winding, coil on coil!
  And here I let time slip for naught!
Aha, you foolhardy sunbeam, caught

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*Pippa Passes.* See Critical Notes. The scene of the introduction is Asolo, a small town in the province of Treviso, about 30 miles from Venice, Italy.

62. **Monsignor,** an ecclesiastical title bestowed by the Pope upon high church officials.

With a single splash from my ewer!
You that would mock the best pursuer,
Was my basin over-deep?
One splash of water ruins you asleep,
And up, up, fleet your brilliant bits
Wheeling and counterwheeling,
Reeling, broken beyond healing —
Now grow together on the ceiling!
That will task your wits.
Whoever it was quenched fire first, hoped to see
Morsel after morsel flee
As merrily, as giddily . . .
Meantime, what lights my sunbeam on,
Where settles by degrees the radiant cripple?
Oh, is it surely blown, my martagon?
New-blown and ruddy as St. Agnes' nipple,
Plump as the flesh-bunch on some Turk bird's poll!
Be sure if corals, branching 'neath the ripple
Of ocean, bud there — fairies watch unroll
Such turban-flowers; I say, such lamps disperse
Thick red flame through that dusk green universe!
I am queen of thee, floweret!
And each fleshy blossom
Preserve I not — safer
Than leaves that embower it,
Or shells that embosom —
From weevil and chafer?
Laugh through my pane then; solicit the bee;
Gibe him, be sure; and, in midst of thy glee,
Love thy queen, worship me!

—Worship whom else? For am I not, this day,
Whate'er I please? What shall I please today?
My morn, noon, eve, and night — how spend my day?
Tomorrow I must be Pippa who winds silk,
The whole year round, to earn just bread and milk;
But, this one day, I have leave to go,
And play out my fancy's fullest games;
I may fancy all day — and it shall be so —
That I taste of the pleasures, am called by the names
Of the Happiest Four in our Asolo!

See! Up the hillside yonder, through the morning,
Someone shall love me, as the world calls love;
I am no less than Ottima, take warning!
The gardens, and the great stone house above,
And other house for shrubs, all glass in front,
Are mine; where Sebald steals, as he is wont,
To court me, while old Luca yet reposes;
And therefore, till the shrub-house door uncloses,
I — what now? — give abundant cause for prate
About me — Ottima, I mean — of late,
Too bold, too confident she'll still face down
The spitefullest of talkers in our town.
How we talk in the little town below!
   But love, love, love — there's better love, I know!
This foolish love was only day's first offer;
I choose my next love to defy the scoffer;
For do not our Bride and Bridegroom sally
Out of Possagno church at noon?
Their house looks over Orcana valley;
Why should not I be the bride as soon
As Ottima? For I saw, beside,
Arrive last night that little bride —
Saw, if you call it seeing her, one flash
Of the pale snow-pure cheek and black bright tresses,
Blacker than all except the black eyelash;
I wonder she contrives those lids no dresses!
— So strict was she, the veil
Should cover close her pale
Pure cheeks — a bride to look at and scarce touch,
Scarce touch, remember, Jules! For are not such
Used to be tended, flower-like, every feature,
As if one's breath would fray the lily of a creature?
A soft and easy life these ladies lead;
Whiteness in us were wonderful indeed.
Oh, save that brow its virgin dimness,
Keep that foot its lady primness,
Let those ankles never swerve
From their exquisite reserve,
Yet have to trip along the streets like me,
All but naked to the knee!
How will she ever grant her Jules a bliss
So startling as her real first infant kiss?
Oh, no — not envy, this!

— Not envy, sure! — for if you gave me
Leave to take or to refuse,
In earnest, do you think I'd choose
That sort of new love to enslave me?
Mine should have lapped me round from the beginning;
As little fear of losing it as winning:
Lovers grow cold, men learn to hate their wives,
And only parents' love can last our lives.
At eve the Son and Mother, gentle pair,

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88. **martagon**, a kind of lily, called the "Turk's cap." 89. **St. Agnes**, a virgin martyr of the fourth century. Pippa had no doubt seen a painting of her in the church. 90. **Turk bird's**, turkey's. The common turkey is supposed to have come from Turkey. 93. **turban**, turban-shaped, like the lily. 100. **weevil and chafer**, insects of the beetle family.

120. **Luca**, Ottima's despised husband. 131. **Possagno**, a village four miles from Asolo.

Commune inside our turret; what prevents
My being Luigi? While that mossy lair
Of lizards through the winter-time is stirred
With each to each imparting sweet intents
For this new-year, as brooding bird to bird
(For I observe of late, the evening walk
Of Luigi and his mother, always ends
Inside our ruined turret, where they talk,
Calmer than lovers, yet more kind than friends),
Let me be cared about, kept out of harm,
And schemed for, safe in love as with a charm;
Let me be Luigi! If I only knew
What was my mother's face — my father, too!
  Nay, if you come to that, best love of all
Is God's; then why not have God's love befall
Myself as, in the palace by the Dome,
Monsignor? — who tonight will bless the home
Of his dead brother; and God bless in turn
That heart which beats, those eyes which mildly burn
With love for all men! I, tonight at least,
Would be that holy and beloved priest.

Now wait! — even I already seem to share
In God's love; what does New-year's hymn declare?
What other meaning do these verses bear?

[illegible]

*All service ranks the same with God:*
*If now, as formerly he trod*
*Paradise, his presence fills*
*Our earth, each only as God wills*
*Can work — God's puppets, best and worst,*
*Are we; there is no last nor first.*

*Say not "a small event!" Why "small"?*
*Costs it more pain that this, ye call*
*A "great event," should come to pass,*
*Than that? Untwine me from the mass*
*Of deeds which make up life, one deed*
*Power shall fall short in or exceed!*

And more of it, and more of it! — oh, yes —
I will pass each, and see their happiness,
And envy none — being just as great, no doubt,
Useful to men, and dear to God, as they!
A pretty thing to care about
So mightily, this single holiday!
But let the sun shine! Wherefore repine?
—With thee to lead me, O Day of mine,
Down the grass path gray with dew,
Under the pine-wood, blind with boughs,
Where the swallow never flew
Nor yet cicala dared carouse —
No, dared carouse! [*She enters the street.*

## I. MORNING

SCENE: *Up the Hillside, inside the Shrub-house.* LUCA'S *Wife,* OTTIMA, *and her Paramour, the German* SEBALD.

*Sebald* [*sings*].

*Let the watching lids wink!*
*Day's ablaze with eyes, think!*
*Deep into the night, drink!*

*Ottima.* Night? Such may be your Rhine-land nights, perhaps;
But this blood-red beam through the shutter's chink
—We call such light, the morning; let us see!
Mind how you grope your way, though! How these tall
Naked geraniums straggle! Push the lattice
Behind that frame! — Nay, do I bid you? — Sebald,
It shakes the dust down on me! Why, of course
The slide-bolt catches. Well, are you content,
Or must I find you something else to spoil?
Kiss and be friends, my Sebald! Is't full morning?
Oh, don't speak then!

*Seb.* Aye, thus it used to be!
Ever your house was, I remember, shut
Till mid-day; I observed that, as I strolled
On mornings through the vale here; country girls
Were noisy, washing garments in the brook,
Hinds drove the slow white oxen up the hills;
But no, your house was mute, would ope no eye!
And wisely; you were plotting one thing there,
Nature, another outside. I looked up —
Rough white wood shutters, rusty iron bars,
Silent as death, blind in a flood of light.
Oh, I remember! — and the peasants laughed
And said, "The old man sleeps with the young wife."
This house was his, this chair, this window — his.

*Otti.* Ah, the clear morning! I can see Saint Mark's;
That black streak is the belfry. Stop; Vicenza
Should lie — there's Padua, plain enough, that blue!
Look o'er my shoulder, follow my finger!

*Seb.* Morning?
It seems to me a night with a sun added.
Where's dew, where's freshness? That bruised plant, I bruised
In getting through the lattice yestereve,

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169. **each to each,** Luigi and his mother. 181. **the Dome,** the Duomo, or cathedral. Near it was the Bishop's palace.

28. **St. Mark's,** the cathedral in Venice. The cities of Vicenza and Padua (lines 29, 30) are also plainly visible.

Droops as it did. See, here's my elbow's mark
I' the dust o' the sill.
*Otti.* Oh, shut the lattice, pray!
*Seb.* Let me lean out. I cannot scent blood here,
Foul as the morn may be.
There, shut the world out!
How do you feel now, Ottima? There, curse
The world and all outside! Let us throw off
This mask; how do you bear yourself? Let's out
With all of it!
*Otti.* Best never speak of it.
*Seb.* Best speak again and yet again of it,
Till words cease to be more than words. "His blood,"
For instance — let those two words mean "his blood"
And nothing more. Notice, I'll say them now,
"His blood."
*Otti.* Assuredly if I repented
The deed —
*Seb.* Repent? Who should repent, or why?
What puts that in your head? Did I once say
That I repented?
*Otti.* No; I said the deed —
*Seb.* "The deed" and "the event" — just now it was
"Our passion's fruit" — the devil take such cant!
Say, once and always, Luca was a wittol,
I am his cutthroat, you are —
*Otti.* Here's the wine;
I brought it when we left the house above,
And glasses too — wine of both sorts. Black? White then?
*Seb.* But am not I his cutthroat? What are you?
*Otti.* There trudges on his business from the Duomo
Benet the Capuchin, with his brown hood
And bare feet; always in one place at church,
Close under the stone wall by the south entry.
I used to take him for a brown cold piece
Of the wall's self, as out of it he rose
To let me pass — at first, I say, I used;
Now, so has that dumb figure fastened on me,
I rather should account the plastered wall
A piece of him, so chilly does it strike.
This, Sebald?
*Seb.* No, the white wine — the white wine!
Well, Ottima, I promised no new year
Should rise on us the ancient shameful way;
Nor does it rise. Pour on! To your black eyes!
Do you remember last damned New Year's day?
*Otti.* You brought those foreign prints. We looked at them
Over the wine and fruit. I had to scheme
To get him from the fire. Nothing but saying
His own set wants the proof-mark, roused him up
To hunt them out.
*Seb.* 'Faith, he is not alive
To fondle you before my face.
*Otti.* Do you
Fondle me then! Who means to take your life
For that, my Sebald?
*Seb.* Hark you, Ottima!
One thing to guard against. We'll not make much
One of the other — that is, not make more
Parade of warmth, childish officious coil,
Than yesterday — as if, sweet, I supposed
Proof upon proof were needed now, now first,
To show I love you — yes, still love you — love you
In spite of Luca and what's come to him —
Sure sign we had him ever in our thoughts,
White sneering old reproachful face and all!
We'll even quarrel, love, at times, as if
We still could lose each other, were not tied
By this; conceive you?
*Otti.* Love!
*Seb.* Not tied so sure!
Because though I was wrought upon, have struck
His insolence back into him — am I
So surely yours? — therefore forever yours?
*Otti.* Love, to be wise (one counsel pays another),
Should we have — months ago, when first we loved,
For instance that May morning we two stole
Under the green ascent of sycamores —
If we have come upon a thing like that
Suddenly —
*Seb.* "A thing" — there again — "a thing!"
*Otti.* Then, Venus' body, had we come upon
My husband Luca Gaddi's murdered corpse
Within there, at his couch-foot, covered close —
Would you have pored upon it? Why persist
In poring now upon it? For 'tis here
As much as there in the deserted house;
You cannot rid your eyes of it. For me,
Now he is dead I hate him worse; I hate —
Dare you stay here? I would go back and hold

---

59. **Capuchin . . . brown hood.** The Capuchins, a branch of the Franciscan order, wear a brown habit.

76. **the proof-mark,** the mark that indicates that a print is one of the first impressions from the plate. 83. **coil,** fuss, ado. 102. **Venus'.** Venus was the goddess of love.

His two dead hands, and say, "I hate you worse,
Luca, than" —
*Seb.* Off, off — take your hands off mine,
'Tis the hot evening — off! oh, morning is it?
*Otti.* There's one thing must be done; you know what thing.
Come in and help to carry. We may sleep
Anywhere in the whole wide house tonight.
*Seb.* What would come, think you, if we let him lie
Just as he is? Let him lie there until
The angels take him! He is turned by this
Off from his face beside, as you will see.
*Otti.* This dusty pane might serve for looking-glass.
Three, four — four gray hairs! Is it so you said
A plait of hair should wave across my neck?
No — this way.
*Seb.* Ottima, I would give your neck,
Each splendid shoulder, both those breasts of yours,
That this were undone! Killing! Kill the world,
So Luca lives again! — aye, lives to sputter
His fulsome dotage on you — yes, and feign
Surprise that I return at eve to sup,
When all the morning I was loitering here —
Bid me dispatch my business and begone.
I would —
*Otti.* See!
*Seb.* No, I'll finish. Do you think
I fear to speak the bare truth once for all?
All we have talked of, is, at bottom, fine
To suffer; there's a recompense in guilt;
One must be venturous and fortunate —
What is one young for, else? In age we'll sigh
O'er the wild reckless wicked days flown over;
Still, we have lived; the vice was in its place.
But to have eaten Luca's bread, have worn
His clothes, have felt his money swell my purse —
Do lovers in romances sin that way?
Why, I was starving when I used to call
And teach you music, starving while you plucked me
These flowers to smell!
*Otti.* My poor lost friend!
*Seb.* He gave me
Life, nothing less; what if he did reproach
My perfidy, and threaten, and do more —
Had he no right? What was to wonder at?
He sat by us at table quietly;
Why must you lean across till our cheeks touched?
Could he do less than make pretense to strike?
'Tis not the crime's sake — I'd commit ten crimes
Greater, to have this crime wiped out, undone!
And you — O how feel you? Feel you for me?
*Otti.* Well then, I love you better now than ever,
And best (look at me while I speak to you) —
Best for the crime; nor do I grieve, in truth,
This mask, this simulated ignorance,
This affectation of simplicity,
Falls off our crime; this naked crime of ours
May not now be looked over — look it down!
Great? Let it be great; but the joys it brought,
Pay they or no its price? Come: they or it!
Speak not! The past, would you give up the past
Such as it is, pleasure and crime together?
Give up that noon I owned my love for you?
The garden's silence: even the single bee
Persisting in his toil, suddenly stopped,
And where he hid you only could surmise
By some campanula chalice set a-swing.
Who stammered — "Yes, I love you?"
*Seb.* And I drew
Back; put far back your face with both my hands
Lest you should grow too full of me — your face
So seemed athirst for my whole soul and body!
*Otti.* And when I ventured to receive you here,
Made you steal hither in the mornings —
*Seb.* When
I used to look up 'neath the shrub-house here,
Till the red fire on its glazed windows spread
To a yellow haze?
*Otti.* Ah — my sign was, the sun
Inflamed the sear side of yon chestnut-tree
Nipped by the first frost.
*Seb.* You would always laugh
At my wet boots; I had to stride through grass
Over my ankles.
*Otti.* Then our crowning night!
*Seb.* The July night?
*Otti.* The day of it too, Sebald!
When heaven's pillars seemed o'erbowed with heat,
Its black-blue canopy suffered descend
Close on us both, to weigh down each to each
And smother up all life except our life.
So lay we till the storm came.
*Seb.* How it came!
*Otti.* Buried in woods we lay, you recollect;
Swift ran the searching tempest overhead;
And ever and anon some bright white shaft
Burned through the pine-tree roof, here burned and there,

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119-120. **turned . . . face.** It was believed that the face of a murdered man looks toward heaven for vengeance.

As if God's messenger through the close wood screen
Plunged and replunged his weapon at a venture,
Feeling for guilty thee and me; then broke
The thunder like a whole sea overhead —
*Seb.* Yes!
*Otti.* — While I stretched myself upon you, hands
To hands, my mouth to your hot mouth, and shook
All my locks loose, and covered you with them —
You, Sebald, the same you!
*Seb.* Slower, Ottima!
*Otti.* And as we lay —
*Seb.* Less vehemently! Love me!
Forgive me! Take not words, mere words, to heart!
Your breath is worse than wine. Breathe slow, speak slow!
Do not lean on me!
*Otti.* Sebald, as we lay,
Rising and falling only with our pants,
Who said, "Let death come now! 'Tis right to die!
Right to be punished! Naught completes such bliss
But woe!" Who said that?
*Seb.* How did we ever rise?
Was 't that we slept? Why did it end?
*Otti.* I felt you
Taper into a point the ruffled ends
Of my loose locks 'twixt both your humid lips.
My hair is fallen now; knot it again!
*Seb.* I kiss you now, dear Ottima, now and now!
This way? Will you forgive me — be once more
My great queen?
*Otti.* Bind it thrice about my brow;
Crown me your queen, your spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent in sin. Say that!
*Seb.* I crown you
My great white queen, my spirit's arbitress,
Magnificent —

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA *singing*—

*The year's at the spring* A
*And day's at the morn;* B
*Morning's at seven;* C
*The hillside's dew-pearled;* D
*The lark's on the wing;* A
*The snail's on the thorn:* B
*God's in his heaven* — C
*All's right with the world!* D

[ PIPPA *passes.*

*Seb.* God's in his heaven! Do you hear that? Who spoke?
You, you spoke!
*Otti.* Oh — that little ragged girl!
She must have rested on the step; we give them
But this one holiday the whole year round.
Did you ever see our silk-mills — their inside?
There are ten silk-mills now belong to you.
She stoops to pick my double heartsease — Sh!
She does not hear; call you out louder!
*Seb.* Leave me! has a feeling of guilt
Go, get your clothes on — dress those shoulders!
*Otti.* Sebald?
*Seb.* Wipe off that paint! I hate you.
*Otti.* Miserable!
*Seb.* My God, and she is emptied of it now!
Outright now! — how miraculously gone
All of the grace — had she not strange grace once?
Why, the blank cheek hangs listless as it likes,
No purpose holds the features up together,
Only the cloven brow and puckered chin
Stay in their places; and the very hair,
That seemed to have a sort of life in it,
Drops, a dead web!
*Otti.* Speak to me — not of me!
*Seb.* — That round great full-orbed face, where not an angle
Broke the delicious indolence — all broken!
*Otti.* To me — not of me! Ungrateful, perjured cheat!
A coward too; but ingrate's worse than all!
Beggar — my slave — a fawning, cringing lie!
Leave me! Betray me! I can see your drift!
A lie that walks and eats and drinks!
*Seb.* My God!
Those morbid olive faultless shoulder-blades —
I should have known there was no blood beneath!
*Otti.* You hate me then? You hate me then?
*Seb.* To think
She would succeed in her absurd attempt,
And fascinate by sinning, show herself
Superior — guilt from its excess superior
To innocence! That little peasant's voice
Has righted all again. Though I be lost,
I know which is the better, never fear,
Of vice or virtue, purity or lust,
Nature or trick! I see what I have done,
Entirely now! Oh, I am proud to feel
Such torments — let the world take credit thence —
I, having done my deed, pay too its price!
I hate, hate — curse you! God's in his heaven!
*Otti.* — Me!
Me! no, no, Sebald, not yourself — kill me!

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**247. Speak to me—not of me!** This is generally regarded as one of the great dramatic lines in the drama.

Mine is the whole crime. Do but kill me — then
Yourself — then — presently — first hear me speak!
I always meant to kill myself — wait, you!
Lean on my breast — not as a breast; don't love me
The more because you lean on me, my own
Heart's Sebald! There, there, both deaths presently!
*Seb.* My brain is drowned now — quite drowned; all I feel
Is . . . is, at swift-recurring intervals,
A hurry-down within me, as of waters
Loosened to smother up some ghastly pit;
There they go — whirls from a black fiery sea!
*Otti.* Not me — to him, O God, be merciful!

SCENE: *Talk by the way, while* PIPPA *is passing from the hillside to Orcana. Foreign Students of painting and sculpture, from Venice, assembled opposite the house of* JULES, *a young French statuary, at Passagno.*

*1st Student.* Attention! My own post is beneath this window, but the pomegranate clump yonder will hide three or four of you with a little squeezing, and Schramm and his pipe must lie flat in the balcony. Four, five — who's a defaulter? We want everybody, for Jules must not be suffered to hurt his bride when the jest's found out.

*2d Stud.* All here! Only our poet's away — never having much meant to be present, moonstrike him! The airs of that fellow, that Giovacchino! He was in violent love with himself, and had a fair prospect of thriving in his suit, so unmolested was it — when suddenly a woman falls in love with him, too; and out of pure jealousy he takes himself off to Trieste, immortal poem and all: whereto is this prophetical epitaph appended already, as Bluphocks assures me — "*Here a mammoth-poem lies, Fouled to death by butterflies.*" His own fault, the simpleton! Instead of cramp couplets, each like a knife in your entrails, he should write, says Bluphocks, both classically and intelligibly. — *Æsculapius, an Epic. Catalogue of the drugs: Hebe's plaister — One strip Cools your lip. Phœbus' emulsion — One bottle Clears your throttle. Mercury's bolus — One box Cures —*

*3d Stud.* Subside, my fine fellow! If the marriage was over by ten o'clock, Jules will certainly be here in a minute with his bride.

*2d Stud.* Good! — only, so should the poet's muse have been universally acceptable, says Bluphocks, *et canibus nostris* — and Delia not better known to our literary dogs than the boy Giovacchino!

*1st Stud.* To the point, now. Where's Gottlieb, the new-comer? Oh — listen, Gottlieb, to what has called down this piece of friendly vengeance on Jules, of which we now assemble to witness the winding-up. We are all agreed, all in a tale, observe, when Jules shall burst out on us in a fury by and by: I am spokesman — the verses that are to undeceive Jules bear my name of Lutwyche — but each professes himself alike insulted by this strutting stone-squarer, who came along from Paris to Munich, and thence with a crowd of us to Venice and Possagno here, but proceeds in a day or two alone again — oh, alone indubitably! — to Rome and Florence. He, forsooth, take up his portion with these dissolute, brutalized, heartless bunglers! — so he was heard to call us all. Now, is Schramm brutalized, I should like to know? Am I heartless?

*Gottlieb.* Why, somewhat heartless; for, suppose Jules a coxcomb as much as you choose, still, for this mere coxcombry, you will have brushed off — what do folks style it? — the bloom of his life. Is it too late to alter? These love-letters now, you call his — I can't laugh at them.

*4th Stud.* Because you never read the sham letters of our inditing which drew forth these.

*Gott.* His discovery of the truth will be frightful.

*4th Stud.* That's the joke. But you should have joined us at the beginning; there's no doubt he loves the girl — loves a model he might hire by the hour!

*Gott.* See here! "He has been accustomed," he writes, "to have Canova's women about him, in stone, and the world's women beside him, in flesh; these being as much below, as those above, his soul's aspiration; but now he is to have the reality." There you laugh again! I say, you wipe off the very dew of his youth.

*1st Stud.* Schramm! (Take the pipe out of his mouth, somebody!) Will Jules lose the bloom of his youth?

*Schramm.* Nothing worth keeping is ever lost in this world: look at a blossom — it drops

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*Stage Directions:* **statuary,** one who makes statues. 16. **Trieste,** a city in Austria. 24. **Æsculapius,** the god of medicine. Giovacchino is ridiculed for regarding love as a disease to be cured by drugs, pills, etc., instead of as a passion to be enjoyed. 25. **Hebe,** the goddess of youth and cupbearer to the gods. 26. **Phœbus,** Apollo, the sun god. 27. **Mercury,** the messenger of the gods. **bolus,** pill.

34. **et canibus nostris . . . Delia.** From Virgil's *Eclogues*, 3, 67: "So that now not Delia herself is more familiar to our dogs." In the Eclogue, which is a poetry contest, Delia is the mistress of one of the singers. She runs no risk in calling upon him at night, because she knows the watchdogs and they know her. 42. **all in a tale,** bound to tell the same story. 72. **Canova's women.** Antonio Canova (1757-1822) was an Italian sculptor. He designed the church at Possagno, his birthplace; in it are several of his statues of women.

presently, having done its service and lasted its time; but fruits succeed, and where would be the blossom's place could it continue? As well affirm that your eye is no longer in your body, because its earliest favorite, whatever it may have first loved to look on, is dead and done with — as that any affection is lost to the soul when its first object, whatever happened first to satisfy it, is superseded in due course. Keep but ever looking, whether with the body's eye or the mind's, and you will soon find something to look on! Has a man done wondering at women? — there follow men, dead and alive, to wonder at. Has he done wondering at men? — there's God to wonder at; and the faculty of wonder may be, at the same time, old and tired enough with respect to its first object, and yet young and fresh sufficiently, so far as concerns its novel one. Thus —

*1st Stud.* Put Schramm's pipe into his mouth again! There, you see! Well, this Jules — a wretched fribble — oh, I watched his disportings at Possagno, the other day! Canova's gallery—you know: there he marches first resolvedly past great works by the dozen without vouchsafing an eye; all at once he stops full at the *Psiche-fanciulla*—cannot pass that old acquaintance without a nod of encouragement — "In your new place, beauty? Then behave yourself as well here as at Munich — I see you!" Next he posts himself deliberately before the unfinished *Pietà* for half an hour without moving, till up he starts of a sudden, and thrusts his very nose into — I say, into — the group; by which gesture you are informed that precisely the sole point he had not fully mastered in Canova's practice was a certain method of using the drill in the articulation of the knee-joint — and that, likewise, has he mastered at length! Good-by, therefore, to poor Canova — whose gallery no longer needs detain his successor Jules, the predestinated novel thinker in marble!

*5th Stud.* Tell him about the women; go on to the women!

*1st Stud.* Why, on that matter he could never be supercilious enough. How should we be other (he said) than the poor devils you see, with those debasing habits we cherish? He was not to wallow in that mire, at least; he would wait, and love only at the proper time, and meanwhile put up with the *Psiche-fanciulla*. Now, I happened to hear of a young Greek — real Greek girl at Malamocco; a true Islander, do you see, with Alciphron's "hair like sea-moss" — Schramm knows! — white and quiet as an apparition, and fourteen years old at farthest — a daughter of Natalia, so she swears — that hag Natalia, who helps us to models at three *lire* an hour. We selected this girl for the heroine of our jest. So first, Jules received a scented letter — somebody had seen his Tydeus at the Academy, and my picture was nothing to it; a profound admirer bade him persevere — would make herself known to him ere long. (Paolina, my little friend of the *Fenice*, transcribes divinely.) And in due time, the mysterious correspondent gave certain hints of her peculiar charms — the pale cheeks, the black hair — whatever, in short, had struck us in our Malamocco model; we retained her name, too — Phene, which is, by interpretation, sea-eagle. Now, think of Jules finding himself distinguished from the herd of us by such a creature! In his very first answer he proposed marrying his monitress; and fancy us over these letters, two, three times a day, to receive and dispatch! I concocted the main of it: relations were in the way — secrecy must be observed — in fine, would he wed her on trust, and only speak to her when they were indissolubly united? St — st — Here they come!

*6th Stud.* Both of them! Heaven's love, speak softly, speak within yourselves!

*5th Stud.* Look at the bridegroom! Half his hair in storm and half in calm — patted down over the left temple — like a frothy cup one blows on to cool it; and the same old blouse that he murders the marble in.

*2d Stud.* Not a rich vest like yours, Hannibal Scratchy! — rich, that your face may the better set it off.

*6th Stud.* And the bride! Yes, sure enough, our Phene! Should you have known her in her clothes? How magnificently pale!

*Gott.* She does not also take it for earnest, I hope?

*1st Stud.* Oh, Natalia's concern, that is! We settle with Natalia.

*6th Stud.* She does not speak — has evidently let out no word. The only thing is, will she equally remember the rest of her lesson, and repeat correctly all those verses which are to break the secret to Jules?

*Gott.* How he gazes on her! Pity — pity!

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105. **fribble,** a frivolous person. 110. **Psiche-fanciulla,** one of the most faultless of Canova's works, representing Psyche as a maiden with a butterfly. *Fanciulla* is Italian for *young girl.* Psyche was the beautiful maiden loved by Cupid. The statue is in the gallery at Possagno. 115. **Pietà,** a statue of the Virgin with the dead Christ in her arms. It is in the church at Possagno. 137. **Malamocco,** a small town on an island of the same name near Venice.

138. **Alciphron,** the most distinguished of the Greek epistolary writers of the second century A.D. 143. **lire,** plural of *lira,* an Italian coin worth about twenty cents. 146. **Tydeus,** an Homeric hero, one of the leaders in the expedition against Thebes. Jules is supposed to have made a statue of him for the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. 150. **Fenice,** Phenix, the principal theater in Venice. Paolina (l. 149) was an actress at the theater. 174. **Hannibal Scratchy,** a burlesque spelling of the name of the noted Italian painter, Annibale Caracci, attached in jest to one of the group.

*1st Stud.* They go in; now, silence! You three — not nearer the window, mind, than that pomegranate — just where the little girl, who a few minutes ago passed us singing, is seated!

## II. NOON

SCENE: *Over Orcana. The house of* JULES, *who crosses its threshold with* PHENE: *she is silent, on which* JULES *begins* —

Do not die, Phene! I am yours now, you
Are mine now; let fate reach me how she likes,
If you'll not die; so, never die! Sit here —
My workroom's single seat. I over-lean
This length of hair and lustrous front; they turn
Like an entire flower upward: eyes, lips, last
Your chin — no, last your throat turns: 'tis their scent
Pulls down my face upon you. Nay, look ever
This one way till I change, grow you — I could
Change into you, beloved!
You by me,
And I by you; this is your hand in mine,
And side by side we sit; all's true. Thank God!
I have spoken; speak you!
O my life to come!
My Tydeus must be carved that's there in clay;
Yet how be carved, with you about the room?
Where must I place you? When I think that once
This room-full of rough block-work seemed my heaven
Without you! Shall I ever work again,
Get fairly into my old ways again,
Bid each conception stand while, trait by trait,
My hand transfers its lineaments to stone?
Will my mere fancies live near you, their truth —
The live truth, passing and repassing me,
Sitting beside me?
Now speak!
Only first,
See, all your letters! Was 't not well contrived?
Their hiding-place is Psyche's robe; she keeps
Your letters next her skin. Which drops out foremost?
Ah — this that swam down like a first moonbeam
Into my world!
Again those eyes complete
Their melancholy survey, sweet and slow,
Of all my room holds; to return and rest
On me, with pity, yet some wonder too;
As if God bade some spirit plague a world,
And this were the one moment of surprise
And sorrow while she took her station, pausing
O'er what she sees, finds good, and must destroy!
What gaze you at? Those? Books, I told you of;
Let your first word to me rejoice them, too:
This minion, a Coluthus, writ in red,
Bister and azure by Bessarion's scribe —
Read this line — no, shame — Homer's be the Greek
First breathed me from the lips of my Greek girl!
This Odyssey in coarse black vivid type
With faded yellow blossoms 'twixt page and page,
To mark great places with due gratitude;
"*He said, and on Antinous directed*
*A bitter shaft*" — a flower blots out the rest!
Again upon your search? My statues, then!
— Ah, do not mind that — better that will look
When cast in bronze — an Almaign Kaiser, that,
Swart-green and gold, with truncheon based on hip.
This, rather, turn to! What, unrecognized?
I thought you would have seen that here you sit
As I imagined you — Hippolyta,
Naked upon her bright Numidian horse.
Recall you this then? "Carve in bold relief" —
So you commanded — "carve, against I come,
A Greek, in Athens, as our fashion was,
Feasting, bay-filleted and thunder-free,
Who rises 'neath the lifted myrtle-branch.
'Praise those who slew Hipparchus!' cry the guests,
'While o'er thy head the singer's myrtle waves
As erst above our champion: stand up, all!'"
See, I have labored to express your thought.
Quite round, a cluster of mere hands and arms
(Thrust in all senses, all ways, from all sides,
Only consenting at the branch's end
They strain toward) serves for frame to a sole face;

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39. **minion**, favorite. **Coluthus**, a Greek epic poet of the 6th century. His *The Rape of Helen* was discovered by Cardinal Bessarion (1395-1472), a noted Greek scholar. 40. **Bister**, brown. 46-47. **He said . . . shaft**, from the *Odyssey*, 22, 10. Upon returning home from his wanderings, Ulysses found his wife Penelope besieged with suitors. When he attacked them, Antinous was the first to fall. The flower that blotted out the rest of the story symbolizes Phene's love that robbed Lutwyche's plot of its bitterness. 50. **Almaign Kaiser**, German emperor. 54. **Hippolyta**, queen of the Amazons, a race of women warriors. 55. **Numidian**. Numidia was a country in northern Africa, now Algeria. 59. **bay-filleted and thunder-free**. A crown of bay or laurel was supposed to be a protection against thunder and lightning because the tree was sacred to Apollo, the sun god. 61. **Hipparchus**, a tyrant of Athens slain in 514 B.C. by Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who carried their swords concealed in myrtle branches. 67. **consenting**, coming together.

The Praiser's, in the center: who with eyes
Sightless, so bend they back to light inside
His brain where visionary forms throng up,
Sings, minding not that palpitating arch
Of hands and arms, nor the quick drip of wine
From the drenched leaves o'erhead, nor crowns cast off,
Violet and parsley crowns to trample on —
Sings, pausing as the patron-ghosts approve,
Devoutly their unconquerable hymn.
But you must say a "well" to that — say "well!"
Because you gaze — am I fantastic, sweet?
Gaze like my very life's-stuff, marble — marbly
Even to the silence! Why, before I found
The real flesh Phene, I inured myself
To see, throughout all nature, varied stuff
For better nature's birth by means of art;
With me, each substance tended to one form
Of beauty — to the human archetype.
On every side occurred suggestive germs
Of that — the tree, the flower — or take the fruit —
Some rosy shape, continuing the peach,
Curved beewise o'er its bough; as rosy limbs,
Depending, nestled in the leaves; and just
From a cleft rose-peach the whole Dryad sprang.
But of the stuffs one can be master of,
How I divined their capabilities!
From the soft-rinded smoothening facile chalk
That yields your outline to the air's embrace,
Half-softened by a halo's pearly gloom;
Down to the crisp imperious steel, so sure
To cut its one confided thought clean out
Of all the world. But marble! — 'neath my tools
More pliable than jelly — as it were
Some clear primordial creature dug from depths
In the earth's heart, where itself breeds itself,
And whence all baser substance may be worked;
Refine it off to air, you may — condense it
Down to the diamond — is not metal there,
When o'er the sudden speck my chisel trips?
— Not flesh, as flake off flake I scale, approach,
Lay bare those bluish veins of blood asleep?
Lurks flame in no strange windings where, surprised
By the swift implement sent home at once,
Flushes and glowings radiate and hover
About its track?
                    Phene? what — why is this?
That whitening cheek, those still dilating eyes!
Ah, you will die — I knew that you would die!

PHENE *begins, on his having long remained silent*

Now the end's coming; to be sure, it must
Have ended sometime! Tush, why need I speak
Their foolish speech? I cannot bring to mind
One half of it, beside; and do not care
For old Natalia now, nor any of them.
Oh, you — what are you? — if I do not try
To say the words Natalia made me learn,
To please your friends — it is to keep myself
Where your voice lifted me, by letting that
Proceed; but can it? Even you, perhaps,
Cannot take up, now you have once let fall,
The music's life, and me along with that —
No, or you would! We'll stay, then, as we are —
Above the world.
                    You creature with the eyes!
If I could look forever up to them,
As now you let me — I believe all sin,
All memory of wrong done, suffering borne,
Would drop down, low and lower, to the earth
Whence all that's low comes, and there touch and stay —
Never to overtake the rest of me,
All that, unspotted, reaches up to you,
Drawn by those eyes! What rises is myself,
Not me the shame and suffering; but they sink,
Are left, I rise above them. Keep me so,
Above the world!
                    But you sink, for your eyes
Are altering — altered! Stay — "I love you, love" —
I could prevent it if I understood.
More of your words to me; was 't in the tone
Or the words, your power?
                    Or stay — I will repeat
Their speech, if that contents you! Only change
No more, and I shall find it presently
Far back here, in the brain yourself filled up.
Natalia threatened me that harm should follow
Unless I spoke their lesson to the end,
But harm to me, I thought she meant, not you.
Your friends — Natalia said they were your friends
And meant you well — because, I doubted it,
Observing (what was very strange to see)
On every face, so different in all else,
The same smile girls like me are used to bear,
But never men, men cannot stoop so low;
Yet your friends, speaking of you, used that smile,
That hateful smirk of boundless self-conceit
Which seems to take possession of the world

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75. **parsley**, frequently used by the ancients in crowns worn at feasts because of its strong fragrance. 92. **Dryad**, a wood nymph.

And make of God a tame confederate,
Purveyor to their appetites — you know!
But still Natalia said they were your friends,
And they assented though they smiled the more,
And all came round me — that thin Englishman
With light lank hair seemed leader of the rest;
He held a paper — "What we want," said he,
Ending some explanation to his friends —
"Is something slow, involved and mystical,
To hold Jules long in doubt, yet take his taste
And lure him on until, at innermost
Where he seeks sweetness' soul, he may find — this!
— As in the apple's core, the noisome fly;
For insects on the rind are seen at once,
And brushed aside as soon, but this is found
Only when on the lips or loathing tongue."
And so he read what I have got by heart:
I'll speak it — "Do not die, love! I am yours" —
No — is not that, or like that, part of words
Yourself began by speaking? Strange to lose
What cost such pains to learn! Is this more right?

*I am a painter who cannot paint;*
*In my life, a devil rather than saint;*
*In my brain, as poor a creature too:*
*No end to all I cannot do!*
*Yet do one thing at least I can —*
*Love a man or hate a man*
*Supremely; thus my lore began.*
*Through the Valley of Love I went,*
*In the lovingest spot to abide,*
*And just on the verge where I pitched my tent,*
*I found Hate dwelling beside.*
(*Let the Bridegroom ask what the painter meant,*
*Of his Bride, of the peerless Bride!*)
*And further, I traversed Hate's grove,*
*In the hatefullest nook to dwell;*
*But lo, where I flung myself prone, couched Love*
*Where the shadow threefold fell.*
(*The meaning—those black bride's-eyes above,*
*Not a painter's lip should tell!*)

"And here," said he, "Jules probably will ask,
'You have black eyes, Love — you are, sure enough,
My peerless bride — then do you tell indeed
What needs some explanation! What means this?' "
— And I am to go on, without a word —

*So, I grew wise in Love and Hate,*
*From simple that I was of late.*
*Once, when I loved, I would enlace*
*Breast, eyelids, hands, feet, form, and face*
*Of her I loved, in one embrace —*
*As if by mere love I could love immensely!*
*Once, when I hated, I would plunge*
*My sword, and wipe with the first lunge*
*My foe's whole life out like a sponge —*
*As if by mere hate I could hate intensely!*
*But now I am wiser, know better the fashion*
*How passion seeks aid from its opposite passion;*
*And if I see cause to love more, hate more*
*Than ever man loved, ever hated before —*
*And seek in the Valley of Love*
*The nest, or the nook in Hate's Grove*
*Where my soul may surely reach*
*The essence, naught less, of each,*
*The Hate of all Hates, the Love*
*Of all Loves, in the Valley or Grove —*
*I find them the very warders*
*Each of the other's borders.*
*When I love most, Love is disguised*
*In Hate; and when Hate is surprised*
*In Love, then I hate most: ask*
*How Love smiles through Hate's iron casque,*
*Hate grins through Love's rose-braided mask—*
*And how, having hated thee,*
*I sought long and painfully*
*To reach thy heart, nor prick*
*The skin but pierce to the quick —*
*Ask this, my Jules, and be answered straight*
*By thy bride — how the painter Lutwyche can hate!*

Jules *interposes*

Lutwyche! Who else? But all of them, no doubt,
Hated me: they at Venice — presently
Their turn, however! You I shall not meet;
If I dreamed, saying this would wake me. Keep
What's here, the gold—we cannot meet again,
Consider! and the money was but meant
For two years' travel, which is over now,
All chance or hope or care or need of it.
This — and what comes from selling these, my casts
And books and medals, except — let them go
Together, so the produce keeps you safe
Out of Natalia's clutches! If by chance
(For all's chance here) I should survive the gang
At Venice, root out all fifteen of them,
We might meet somewhere, since the world is wide.

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181-237. Although these lines are intentionally involved in manner, they reveal the hateful plot to Jules, and he learns what Phene has been.

241. **If I dreamed, etc.** If I have been in love with a phantom-Phene, saying as I do, "It's over," will bring me back to the harsh truth.

*From without is heard the voice of* Pippa, *singing —*

*Give her but a least excuse to love me!*
*When — where —*
*How — can this arm establish her above me,*
*If fortune fixed her as my lady there,*
*There already, to eternally reprove me?*
*("Hist!" — said Kate the Queen;*
*But "Oh!" cried the maiden, binding her tresses,*
*" 'Tis only a page that carols unseen,*
*Crumbling your hounds their messes!")*

*Is she wronged? —To the rescue of her honor,*
*My heart!*
*Is she poor? — What costs it to be styled a donor?*
*Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.*
*But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!*
*("Nay, list!" — bade Kate the Queen;*
*And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,*
*" 'Tis only a page that carols unseen,*
*Fitting your hawks their jesses!")*

[Pippa *passes*

Jules *resumes* — → accepts the marriage

What name was that the little girl sang forth?
Kate? The Cornaro, doubtless, who renounced
The crown of Cyprus to be lady here
At Asolo, where still her memory stays,
And peasants sing how once a certain page
Pined for the grace of her so far above
His power of doing good to, "Kate the Queen—
She never could be wronged, be poor," he sighed,
"Need him to help her!"
Yes, a bitter thing
To see our lady above all need of us;
Yet so we look ere we will love; not I,
But the world looks so. If whoever loves
Must be, in some sort, god or worshiper,
The blessing or the blest one, queen or page,
Why should we always choose the page's part?
Here is a woman with utter need of me —
I find myself queen here, it seems!
How strange!
Look at the woman here with the new soul,
Like my own Psyche — fresh upon her lips
Alit, the visionary butterfly,
Waiting my word to enter and make bright,
Or flutter off and leave all blank as first.
This body had no soul before, but slept
Or stirred, was beauteous or ungainly, free
From taint or foul with stain, as outward things
Fastened their image on its passiveness;
Now, it will wake, feel, live — or die again!
Shall to produce form out of unshaped stuff
Be Art — and further, to evoke a soul
From form be nothing? This new soul is mine!

Now, to kill Lutwyche, what would that do? — save
A wretched dauber, men will hoot to death
Without me, from their hooting. Oh, to hear
God's voice plain as I heard it first, before
They broke in with their laughter! I heard them
Henceforth, not God.
To Ancona — Greece — some isle!
I wanted silence only; there is clay
Everywhere. One may do whate'er one likes
In Art; the only thing is, to make sure
That one does like it — which takes pains to know.
Scatter all this, my Phene—this mad dream!
Who, what is Lutwyche, what Natalia's friends,
What the whole world except our love — my own,
Own Phene? But I told you, did I not,
Ere night we travel for your land — some isle
With the sea's silence on it? Stand aside—
I do but break these paltry models up
To begin Art afresh. Meet Lutwyche, I —
And save him from my statue meeting him?
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Like a god going through his world, there stands
One mountain for a moment in the dusk,
Whole brotherhoods of cedars on its brow;
And you are ever by me while I gaze
— Are in my arms as now — as now — as now!
Some unsuspected isle in the far seas!
Some unsuspected isle in far-off seas!

Scene: *Talk by the way, while* Pippa *is passing from Orcana to the Turret. Two or three of the Austrian Police loitering with* Bluphocks, *an English vagabond, just in view of the Turret.*

*Bluphocks.* So, that is your Pippa, the little girl who passed us singing? Well, your Bishop's Intendant's money shall be honestly

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258. **Kate the Queen.** Caterina Cornaro, the last queen of the island of Cyprus, off the coast of Turkey, was induced to yield her kingdom to the Republic of Venice in 1489. She was received in Venice with great honor and was assigned a palace and a court at Asolo (line 274). 270. **jesses.** A jess is a strap of leather or silk fastened round the leg of a hawk and usually fitted with a ring to which the leash of the hunter is attached. 290. **butterfly**, symbol of the soul and of immortality.

306. **Ancona**, a city on the east coast of Italy. 318-319. **Meet . . . him?** Jules means, "I will not kill Lutwyche in a duel, because I want him to have the pain of seeing a fine complete work of mine in marble."

3. **Intendant's money.** The Bishop's Superintendent (Maffeo, or Ugo) has bribed Bluphocks to seduce Pippa, the rightful heir to the estate that the Bishop has just inherited from his brother. Maffeo, who is in charge of the estate, will expect a large reward for his services.

earned: — now, don't make me that sour face because I bring the Bishop's name into the business; we know he can have nothing to do with such horrors; we know that he is a saint and all that a bishop should be, who is a great man beside. *Oh, were but every worm a maggot, Every fly a grig, Every bough a Christmas faggot, Every tune a jig!* In fact, I have abjured all religions; but the last I inclined to was the Armenian: for I have traveled, do you see, and at Koenigsberg, Prussia Improper (so styled because there's a sort of bleak hungry sun there), you might remark, over a venerable house-porch, a certain Chaldee inscription; and brief as it is, a mere glance at it used absolutely to change the mood of every bearded passenger. In they turned, one and all; the young and lightsome, with no irreverent pause, the aged and decrepit, with a sensible alacrity: 'twas the Grand Rabbi's abode, in short. Struck with curiosity, I lost no time in learning Syriac — (these are vowels, you dogs — follow my stick's end in the mud — *Celarent, Darii, Ferio!*) and one morning presented myself, spelling-book in hand, a, b, c, — I picked it out letter by letter, and what was the purport of this miraculous posy? Some cherished legend of the past, you'll say — "*How Moses hocus-pocussed Egypt's land with fly and locust*" — or "*How to Jonah sounded harshish, Get thee up and go to Tarshish*" — or "*How the angel meeting Balaam, Straight his ass returned a salaam.*" In no wise! "*Shackabrack — Boach — somebody or other — Isaach, Re-cei-ver, Pur-cha-ser, and Ex-chan-ger of — Stolen Goods!*" So, talk to me of the religion of a bishop! I have renounced all bishops save Bishop Beveridge! — mean to live so — and die — *As some Greek dog-sage, dead and merry, Hellward bound in Charon's wherry, With food for both worlds, under and upper, Lupine-seed and Hecate's supper, And never an obolus* . . . (though thanks to you, or this Intendant through you, or this Bishop through his Intendant — I possess a burning pocket-full of *zwanzigers*) . . . *To pay the Stygian Ferry!*

*1st Policeman.* There is the girl, then; go and deserve them the moment you have pointed out to us Signor Luigi and his mother. [*To the rest.*] I have been noticing a house yonder, this long while — not a shutter unclosed since morning!

*2d Pol.* Old Luca Gaddi's, that owns the silk-mills here. He dozes by the hour, wakes up, sighs deeply, says he should like to be Prince Metternich, and then dozes again after having bidden young Sebald, the foreigner, set his wife to playing draughts. Never molest such a household; they mean well.

*Blup.* Only, cannot you tell me something of this little Pippa, I must have to do with? One could make something of that name. Pippa — that is, short for Felippa — riming to *Panurge consults Hertrippa—Believest thou, King Agrippa?* Something might be done with that name.

*2d Pol.* Put into rime that your head and a ripe muskmelon would not be dear at half a *zwanziger!* Leave this fooling, and look out; the afternoon's over or nearly so.

*3d Pol.* Where in this passport of Signor Luigi does our Principal instruct you to watch him so narrowly? There? What's there beside a simple signature? (That English fool's busy watching.)

*2d Pol.* Flourish all round — "Put all possible obstacles in his way;" oblong dot at the end — "Detain him till further advices reach you"; scratch at bottom — "Send him back on pretense of some informality in the above"; ink-spirt on right-hand side (which is the case here) — "Arrest him at once." Why and wherefore, I don't concern myself, but my instructions amount to this: if Signor Luigi leaves home tonight for Vienna — well and good, the passport deposed with us for our *visa* is really for his own use, they have misinformed the Office, and he means well; but let him stay over tonight — there has been the pretense we suspect, the accounts of his corresponding and holding intelligence with

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10. **grig,** cricket. 13. **Armenian.** Bluphocks has always adopted the form of religion best suited to his immediate purpose. 14. **Koenigsberg,** a fortified city of East Prussia, beyond the border of "Prussia Proper," the name applied to the arm of land between Poland and the Baltic Sea. 17. **Chaldee inscription.** The Chaldeans spoke a Semitic dialect. They were the leading people in ancient Babylonia. 25. **Syriac,** the common language of Western Asia from the third to the eighth century. It has five vowels. 27. **Celarent, Darii, Ferio,** coined words used in formal logic to designate certain types of reasoning. 34. **harshish,** harsh. **Tarshish,** an ancient city; mentioned in the Old Testament (see *Jonah*, 1:1-2). 35. **Balaam.** See *Numbers*, 22. 41. **Bishop Beveridge.** Bluphocks is making a pun on the name of a Calvinist theologian who lived in the 17th century. 44. **Charon's wherry.** Charon was a god of hell. It was his task to carry the shades of the dead across the river Styx (the Stygian Ferry of line 50). The price of the passage was an obolus (line 46), a small silver coin worth about fifteen cents, found in the mouth of the body. 45. **Lupine,** a kind of plant. *Lupine* means *wolfish.* 46. **Hecate's supper.** Hecate was a goddess of hell who was propitiated by frequent gifts of food, usually placed at cross-roads.

50. **zwanzigers.** A zwanziger is an Austrian coin worth about fifteen cents. 60. **Metternich,** a famous Austrian statesman (1773-1859) noted for his policy of conservatism and repression. He was an enemy of Italy. Cf. *The Italian in England*, page 209. 68. **Panurge . . . Hertrippa.** Panurge is a character in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, a romance by the French writer Rabelais (1490-1553). Panurge consults the magician Hertrippa in regard to marriage. 68-69. **Believest . . . Agrippa.** From *Acts*, 26:27. Paul tells the story of his conversion to Christianity to Festus and Agrippa, and asks, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know thou believest." 71-73. **Put into rime . . . zwanziger.** The policeman ridicules Bluphocks by telling him to make a rime out of the fact that his head and a ripe muskmelon together are worth only seven and a half cents, the value of a muskmelon alone.

the Carbonari are correct, we arrest him at once, tomorrow comes Venice, and presently Spielberg. Bluphocks makes the signal, sure enough! That is he, entering the turret with his mother, no doubt.

### III. EVENING

SCENE: *Inside the Turret on the Hill above Asolo.* LUIGI *and his* MOTHER *entering.*

*Mother.* If there blew wind, you'd hear a long sigh, easing
The utmost heaviness of music's heart.
*Luigi.* Here in the archway?
*Mother.* Oh no, no — in farther,
Where the echo is made, on the ridge.
*Luigi.* Here surely, then.
How plain the tap of my heel as I leaped up!
Hark — "Lucius Junius!" The very ghost of a voice
Whose body is caught and kept by . . . what are those?
Mere withered wallflowers, waving overhead?
They seem an elvish group with thin bleached hair
That lean out of their topmost fortress — look
And listen, mountain men, to what we say,
Hand under chin of each grave earthy face.
Up and show faces all of you! — "All of you!"
That's the king dwarf with the scarlet comb; old Franz,
Come down and meet your fate? Hark — "Meet your fate!"
*Mother.* Let him not meet it, my Luigi — do not
Go to his City! Putting crime aside,
Half of these ills of Italy are feigned;
Your Pellicos and writers for effect,
Write for effect.
*Luigi.* Hush! Say A writes, and B.
*Mother.* These A's and B's write for effect, I say.
Then, evil is in its nature loud, while good
Is silent; you hear each petty injury,
None of his virtues; he is old beside,
Quiet and kind, and densely stupid. Why
Do A and B kill not him themselves?
*Luigi.* They teach
Others to kill him — me — and, if I fail,
Others to succeed; now, if A tried and failed,
I could not teach that; mine's the lesser task.
Mother, they visit night by night . . .
*Mother.* — You, Luigi?
Ah, will you let me tell you what you are?
*Luigi.* Why not? Oh, the one thing you fear to hint,
You may assure yourself I say and say
Ever to myself! At times — nay, even as now
We sit — I think my mind is touched, suspect
All is not sound; but is not knowing that,
What constitutes one sane or otherwise?
I know I am thus — so, all is right again.
I laugh at myself as through the town I walk,
And see men merry as if no Italy
Were suffering; then I ponder — "I am rich,
Young, healthy; why should this fact trouble me,
More than it troubles these?" But it does trouble.
No, trouble's a bad word; for as I walk
There's springing and melody and giddiness,
And old quaint turns and passages of my youth,
Dreams long forgotten, little in themselves,
Return to me — whatever may amuse me.
And earth seems in a truce with me, and heaven
Accords with me, all things suspend their strife,
The very cicala laughs "There goes he, and there!
Feast him, the time is short; he is on his way
For the world's sake; feast him this once, our friend!"
And in return for all this, I can trip
Cheerfully up the scaffold-steps. I go
This evening, mother!
*Mother.* But mistrust yourself —
Mistrust the judgment you pronounce on him!
*Luigi.* Oh, there I feel — am sure that I am right!
*Mother.* Mistrust your judgment then, of the mere means
To this wild enterprise; say, you are right —
How should one in your state e'er bring to pass
What would require a cool head, a cool heart,
And a calm hand? You never will escape.
*Luigi.* Escape? To even wish that would spoil all.
The dying is best part of it. Too much
Have I enjoyed these fifteen years of mine?
To leave myself excuse for longer life;
Was not life pressed down, running o'er with joy,
That I might finish with it ere my fellows
Who, sparelier feasted, make a longer stay?
I was put at the board-head, helped to all
At first; I rise up happy and content.
God must be glad one loves his world so much.
I can give news of earth to all the dead

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96. **Carbonari,** a secret society of Italian patriots organized in 1820 to help free Italy from the control of Austria. 98. **Spielberg,** an Austrian prison.

*Evening.* 6. **Lucius Junius,** Lucius Junius Brutus, who led the revolt against the Tarquins in Rome and established the Roman Republic in 509 B.C. Luigi is contemplating a similar deed. 14. **Franz,** Francis I, emperor of Austria (1804-1835). 19. **Pellicos.** Silvio Pellico (1788-1854) was an Italian patriot and a member of the Carbonari. He was imprisoned for eleven years, part of the time in Spielberg Castle.

Who ask me: — last year's sunsets, and great stars
Which had a right to come first and see ebb
The crimson wave that drifts the sun away —
Those crescent moons with notched and burning rims
That strengthened into sharp fire, and there stood,
Impatient of the azure — and that day
In March, a double rainbow stopped the storm —
May's warm slow yellow moonlit summer nights —
Gone are they, but I have them in my soul!
*Mother.* (He will not go!)
*Luigi.* You smile at me? 'Tis true —
Voluptuousness, grotesqueness, ghastliness,
Environ my devotedness as quaintly
As round about some antique altar wreathe
The rose festoons, goats' horns, and oxen's skulls.
*Mother.* See now; you reach the city, you must cross
His threshold — how?
*Luigi.* Oh, that's if we conspired!
Then would come pains in plenty, as you guess —
But guess not how the qualities most fit
For such an office, qualities I have,
Would little stead me, otherwise employed,
Yet prove of rarest merit only here.
Everyone knows for what his excellence
Will serve, but no one ever will consider
For what his worst defect might serve; and yet
Have you not seen me range our coppice yonder
In search of a distorted ash? — I find
The wry spoilt branch a natural perfect bow.
Fancy the thrice-sage, thrice-precautioned man
Arriving at the palace on my errand!
No, no! I have a handsome dress packed up —
White satin here, to set off my black hair;
In I shall march — for you may watch your life out
Behind thick walls, make friends there to betray you;
More than one man spoils everything. March straight —
Only, no clumsy knife to fumble for,
Take the great gate, and walk (not saunter) on
Through guards and guards — I have rehearsed it all
Inside the turret here a hundred times.
Don't ask the way of whom you meet, observe!
But where they cluster thickliest is the door
Of doors; they'll let you pass — they'll never blab
Each to the other, he knows not the favorite,
Whence he is bound and what's his business now.
Walk in — straight up to him; you have no knife.
Be prompt, how should he scream? Then, out with you!
Italy, Italy, my Italy!
You're free, you're free! Oh, mother, I could dream
They got about me — Andrea from his exile,
Pier from his dungeon, Gualtier from his grave!
*Mother.* Well, you shall go. Yet seems this patriotism
The easiest virtue for a selfish man
To acquire; he loves himself — and next, the world —
If he must love beyond — but naught between:
As a short-sighted man sees naught midway
His body and the sun above. But you
Are my adored Luigi, ever obedient
To my least wish, and running o'er with love;
I could not call you cruel or unkind.
Once more, your ground for killing him! — then go!
*Luigi.* Now do you try me, or make sport of me?
How first the Austrians got these provinces...
(If that is all, I'll satisfy you soon)
— Never by conquest but by cunning, for
That treaty whereby . . .
*Mother.* Well?
*Luigi.* (Sure, he's arrived,
The tell-tale cuckoo; spring's his confidant,
And he lets out her April purposes!)
Or . . . better go at once to modern time.
He has . . . they have . . . in fact, I understand
But can't restate the matter; that's my boast:
Others could reason it out to you, and prove
Things they have made me feel.
*Mother.* Why go tonight?
Morn's for adventure. Jupiter is now
A morning-star. I cannot hear you, Luigi!
*Luigi.* "I am the bright and morning-star," saith God —
And, "to such an one I give the morning-star."
The gift of the morning-star! Have I God's gift
Of the morning-star?

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122-123. **Andrea, Pier, Gualtier,** imaginary former conspirators against the tyranny of Austria. 135. **How . . . provinces.** Austria gained part of Northern Italy by conquest in 1813, and the rest by the terms of the treaty made at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. 146-147. **Jupiter . . . morning-star.** When a planet rises after midnight, it is called a morning star. It is now evening, and the mother urges Luigi to wait until morning—until Jupiter rises. 148. **I am,** etc. From *Revelation*, 22:16.—"I Jesus . . . am the bright and morning star." 149. **to . . . star.** From *Revelation*, 2:26-28.—"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end, to him will I give . . . the morning star."

*Mother.* Chiara will love to see
That Jupiter an evening-star next June.
*Luigi.* True, mother. Well for those who live through June!
Great noontides, thunder-storms, all glaring pomps
That triumph at the heels of June the god
Leading his revel through our leafy world.
Yes, Chiara will be here.
*Mother.* In June: remember,
Yourself appointed that month for her coming.
*Luigi.* Was that low noise the echo?
*Mother.* The night-wind.
She must be grown — with her blue eyes upturned
As if life were one long and sweet surprise:
In June she comes.
*Luigi.* We were to see together
The Titian at Treviso. There, again!

[*From without is heard the voice of* PIPPA, *singing* —

*A king lived long ago,*
*In the morning of the world,*
*When earth was nigher heaven than now;*
*And the king's locks curled,*
*Disparting o'er a forehead full*
*As the milk-white space 'twixt horn and horn*
*Of some sacrificial bull —*
*Only calm as a babe new-born:*
*For he was got to a sleepy mood,*
*So safe from all decrepitude,*
*Age with its bane, so sure gone by,*
*(The gods so loved him while he dreamed)*
*That, having lived thus long, there seemed*
*No need the king should ever die.*

*Luigi.* No need that sort of king should ever die!

*Among the rocks his city was;*
*Before his palace, in the sun,*
*He sat to see his people pass,*
*And judge them every one*
*From its threshold of smooth stone.*
*They haled him many a valley-thief*
*Caught in the sheep-pens, robber-chief*
*Swarthy and shameless, beggar-cheat,*
*Spy-prowler, or rough pirate found*
*On the sea-sand left aground;*
*And sometimes clung about his feet,*
*With bleeding lip and burning cheek,*
*A woman, bitterest wrong to speak*
*Of one with sullen thickset brows:*
*And sometimes from the prison-house*
*The angry priests a pale wretch brought,*
*Who through some chink had pushed and pressed*
*On knees and elbows, belly and breast,*
*Worm-like into the temple — caught*
*He was by the very god,*
*Who ever in the darkness strode*
*Backward and forward, keeping watch*
*O'er his brazen bowls, such rogues to catch!*
*These, all and every one,*
*The king judged, sitting in the sun.*

*Luigi.* That king should still judge sitting in the sun!

*His councilors, on left and right,*
*Looked anxious up — but no surprise*
*Disturbed the king's old smiling eyes*
*Where the very blue had turned to white.*
*'Tis said, a Python scared one day*
*The breathless city, till he came,*
*With forky tongue and eyes on flame,*
*Where the old king sat to judge alway;*
*But when he saw the sweepy hair*
*Girt with a crown of berries rare*
*Which the god will hardly give to wear*
*To the maiden who singeth, dancing bare*
*In the altar-smoke by the pine-torch lights,*
*At his wondrous forest rites —*
*Seeing this, he did not dare*
*Approach that threshold in the sun,*
*Assault the old king smiling there.*
*Such grace had kings when the world begun!*
[PIPPA *passes*

*Luigi.* And such grace have they, now that the world ends!
The Python at the city, on the throne,
And brave men, God would crown for slaying him,
Lurk in by-corners lest they fall his prey.
Are crowns yet to be won in this late time,
Which weakness makes me hesitate to reach?
'Tis God's voice calls; how could I stay? Farewell!

SCENE: *Talk by the way, while* PIPPA *is passing from the Turret to the Bishop's Brother's House, close to the Duomo S. Maria. Poor* GIRLS *sitting on the steps.*

*1st Girl.* There goes a swallow to Venice — the stout seafarer!
Seeing those birds fly makes one wish for wings.
Let us all wish; you wish first!
*2d Girl.* I? This sunset
To finish.
*3d Girl.* That old — somebody I know,
Grayer and older than my grandfather,

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151. **Chiara**, Luigi's betrothed. The mother hopes to keep Luigi from going by reminding him of her. 163. **The Titian**, an altar-piece by Titian, a noted Venetian painter (1477-1576), in the Cathedral of San Pietro, at Treviso, an Italian town seventeen miles from Venice. 164. **A king**, etc. This song was first published in 1835; it was changed considerably when adapted to this drama.

To give me the same treat he gave last week —
Feeding me on his knee with fig-peckers,
Lampreys and red Breganze-wine, and mumbling
The while some folly about how well I fare,
Let sit and eat my supper quietly;
Since had he not himself been late this morning
Detained at — never mind where — had he not —
"Eh, baggage, had I not!" —
*2d Girl.* How she can lie!
*3d Girl.* Look there — by the nails!
*2d Girl.* What makes your fingers red?
*3d Girl.* Dipping them into wine to write bad words with
On the bright table; how he laughed!
*1st Girl.* My turn.
Spring's come and summer's coming. I would wear
A long loose gown, down to the feet and hands,
With plaits here, close about the throat, all day;
And all night lie, the cool long nights, in bed;
And have new milk to drink, apples to eat,
Deuzans and junetings, leather-coats — ah, I should say,
This is away in the fields — miles!
*3d Girl.* Say at once
You'd be at home; she'd always be at home!
Now comes the story of the farm among
The cherry orchards, and how April snowed
White blossoms on her as she ran. Why, fool,
They've rubbed the chalk-mark out, how tall you were,
Twisted your starling's neck, broken his cage,
Made a dung-hill of your garden!
*1st Girl.* They destroy
My garden since I left them? well — perhaps
I would have done so; so I hope they have!
A fig-tree curled out of our cottage wall;
They called it mine—I have forgotten why—
It must have been there long ere I was born;
*Cric* — *cric* — I think I hear the wasps o'erhead
Pricking the papers strung to flutter there
And keep off birds in fruit-time — coarse long papers,
And the wasps eat them, prick them through and through.
*3d Girl.* How her mouth twitches! Where was I? — before
She broke in with her wishes and long gowns
And wasps — would I be such a fool! — Oh, here!
This is my way: I answer everyone
Who asks me why I make so much of him —
(If you say, "you love him" — straight "he'll not be gulled!")
"He that seduced me when I was a girl
Thus high — had eyes like yours, or hair like yours,
Brown, red, white," — as the case may be; that pleases!
See how that beetle burnishes in the path!
There sparkles he along the dust; and, there—
Your journey to that maize-tuft spoiled at least!
*1st Girl.* When I was young, they said if you killed one
Of those sunshiny beetles that his friend
Up there would shine no more that day nor next.
*2d Girl.* When you were young? Nor are you young, that's true.
How your plump arms, that were, have dropped away!
Why, I can span them. Cecco beats you still?
No matter, so you keep your curious hair.
I wish they'd find a way to dye our hair
Your color — any lighter tint, indeed,
Than black; the men say they are sick of black,
Black eyes, black hair!
*4th Girl.* Sick of yours, like enough.
Do you pretend you ever tasted lampreys
And ortolans? Giovita, of the palace,
Engaged (but there's no trusting him) to slice me
Polenta with a knife that had cut up
An ortolan.
*2d Girl.* Why, there! Is not that Pippa
We are to talk to, under the window — quick! —
Where the lights are?
*1st Girl.* That she? No, or she would sing,
For the Intendant said—
*3d Girl.* Oh, you sing first!
Then, if she listens and comes close — I'll tell you —
Sing that song the young English noble made,
Who took you for the purest of the pure,
And meant to leave the world for you — what fun!
*2d Girl.* [*Sings.*]

*You'll love me yet! — and I can tarry*
*Your love's protracted growing:*
*June reared that bunch of flowers you carry,*
*From seeds of April's sowing.*

*I plant a heartfull now: some seed*
*At least is sure to strike,*

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7. **fig-peckers**, birds that feed on figs. 8. **Lampreys**, eel-like fish, considered a delicacy. **Breganze-wine**, wine made at Breganza, a village in northern Italy. 22. **Deuzans, junetings, leather-coats**, varieties of apples.

64. **ortolan**, a small singing bird, regarded as a table delicacy. 66. **Polenta**, corn-meal porridge.

*And yield — what you'll not pluck indeed,*
*Not love, but, may be, like.*

*You'll look at least on love's remains,*
*A grave's one violet:*
*Your look? — that pays a thousand pains.*
*What's death? You'll love me yet!*

*3d Girl.* [*To* PIPPA *who approaches.*] Oh, you may come closer — we shall not eat you! Why, you seem the very person that the great rich handsome Englishman has fallen so violently in love with. I'll tell you all about it.

## IV. NIGHT

SCENE: *Inside the Palace by the Duomo.* MONSIGNOR, *dismissing his* Attendants.

*Monsignor.* Thanks, friends, many thanks! I chiefly desire life now, that I may recompense every one of you. Most I know something of already. What, a repast prepared? *Benedicto benedicatur* . . . ugh, ugh! Where was I? Oh, as you were remarking, Ugo, the weather is mild, very unlike winter-weather; but I am a Sicilian, you know, and shiver in your Julys here. To be sure, when 'twas full summer at Messina, as we priests used to cross in procession the great square on Assumption Day, you might see our thickest yellow tapers twist suddenly in two, each like a falling star, or sink down on themselves in a gore of wax. But go, my friends, but go! [*To the* Intendant.] Not you, Ugo! [*The others leave the apartment.*] I have long wanted to converse with you, Ugo.

*Intendant.* Uguccio —

*Mon.* . . . 'guccio Stefani, man! of Ascoli, Fermo, and Fossombruno; — what I do need instructing about, are these accounts of your administration of my poor brother's affairs. Ugh! I shall never get through a third part of your accounts; take some of these dainties before we attempt it, however. Are you bashful to that degree? For me, a crust and water suffice.

*Inten.* Do you choose this especial night to question me?

*Mon.* This night, Ugo. You have managed my late brother's affairs since the death of our elder brother: fourteen years and a month, all but three days. On the Third of December, I find him —

*Inten.* If you have so intimate an acquaintance with your brother's affairs, you will be tender of turning so far back; they will hardly bear looking into, so far back.

*Mon.* Aye, aye, ugh, ugh — nothing but disappointments here below! I remark a considerable payment made to yourself on this Third of December. Talk of disappointments! There was a young fellow here, Jules, a foreign sculptor — I did my utmost to advance, that the Church might be a gainer by us both: he was going on hopefully enough, and of a sudden he notifies to me some marvelous change that has happened in his notions of Art. Here's his letter — "He never had a clearly conceived Ideal within his brain till today. Yet since his hand could manage a chisel, he has practiced expressing other men's Ideals; and, in the very perfection he has attained to, he foresees an ultimate failure: his unconscious hand will pursue its prescribed course of old years, and will reproduce with a fatal expertness the ancient types, let the novel one appear never so palpably to his spirit. There is but one method of escape: confiding the virgin type to as chaste a hand, he will turn painter instead of sculptor, and paint, not carve, its characteristics" — strike out, I dare say, a school like Correggio. How think you, Ugo?

*Inten.* Is Correggio a painter?

*Mon.* Foolish Jules! and yet, after all, why foolish? He may — probably will — fail egregiously; but if there should arise a new painter, will it not be in some such way, by a poet now, or a musician (spirits who have conceived and perfected an Ideal through some other channel), transferring it to this, and escaping our conventional roads by pure ignorance of them; eh, Ugo? If you have no appetite, talk at least, Ugo!

*Inten.* Sir, I can submit no longer to this course of yours. First, you select the group of which I formed one — next you thin it gradually — always retaining me with your smile — and so do you proceed till you have fairly got me alone with you between four stone walls. And now then? Let this farce, this chatter end now; what is it you want with me?

*Mon.* Ugo!

*Inten.* From the instant you arrived, I felt your smile on me as you questioned me about this and the other article in those papers — why your brother should have given me this villa, that *podere* — and your nod at the end meant — what?

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90. **Englishman,** Bluphocks.
*Night.* 5. **Benedicto benedicatur,** a form of blessing for the food—"Let it be consecrated with a good saying." 8. **a Sicilian.** The Bishop has come from Messina, in Sicily, to take charge of his brother's estate. 12. **Assumption Day,** a church festival celebrated on August 15 to commemorate the Ascension of the Virgin Mary. 20-21. **Ascoli, Fermo, Fossombruno,** towns of central Italy.

54-55. **perfection . . . failure,** a favorite doctrine with Browning. Cf. *Andrea del Sarto*, 97, p. 267. 64. **Correggio,** a famous Italian painter (1494-1534). 91. **podere,** a small farm or manor.

*Mon.* Possibly that I wished for no loud talk here. If once you set me coughing, Ugo! —

*Inten.* I have your brother's hand and seal to all I possess; now ask me what for! what service I did him — ask me!

*Mon.* I would better not; I should rip up old disgraces, let out my poor brother's weaknesses. By the way, Maffeo of Forli (which, I forgot to observe, is your true name), was the interdict ever taken off you for robbing that church at Cesena?

*Inten.* No, nor needs be; for when I murdered your brother's friend, Pasquale, for him —

*Mon.* Ah, he employed you in that business, did he? Well, I must let you keep, as you say, this villa and that *podere*, for fear the world should find out my relations were of so indifferent a stamp? Maffeo, my family is the oldest in Messina, and century after century have my progenitors gone on polluting themselves with every wickedness under heaven. My own father — rest his soul! — I have, I know, a chapel to support that it may rest; my dear two dead brothers were — what you know tolerably well; I, the youngest, might have rivaled them in vice, if not in wealth, but from my boyhood I came out from among them, and so am not partaker of their plagues. My glory springs from another source; or if from this, by contrast only—for I, the bishop, am the brother of your employers, Ugo. I hope to repair some of their wrong, however; so far as my brother's ill-gotten treasure reverts to me, I can stop the consequences of his crime; and not one *soldo* shall escape me. Maffeo, the sword we quiet men spurn away, you shrewd knaves pick up and commit murders with; what opportunities the virtuous forego, the villainous seize. Because, to pleasure myself apart from other considerations, my food would be millet-cake, my dress sackcloth, and my couch straw — am I therefore to let you, the off-scouring of the earth, seduce the poor and ignorant by appropriating a pomp these will be sure to think lessens the abominations so unaccountably and exclusively associated with it? Must I let villas and *poderi* go to you, a murderer and thief, that you may beget by means of them other murderers and thieves? No — if my cough would but allow me to speak!

*Inten.* What am I to expect? You are going to punish me?

*Mon.* Must punish you, Maffeo. I cannot afford to cast away a chance. I have whole centuries of sin to redeem, and only a month or two of life to do it in. How should I dare to say —

*Inten.* "Forgive us our trespasses"?

*Mon.* My friend, it is because I avow myself a very worm, sinful beyond measure, that I reject a line of conduct you would applaud perhaps. Shall I proceed, as it were, a-pardoning? — I? — who have no symptom of reason to assume that aught less than my strenuousest efforts will keep myself out of mortal sin, much less keep others out. No; I do trespass, but will not double that by allowing you to trespass.

*Inten.* And suppose the villas are not your brother's to give, nor yours to take? Oh, you are hasty enough just now!

*Mon.* 1, 2 — No. 3! — aye, can you read the substance of a letter, No. 3, I have received from Rome? It is precisely on the ground there mentioned, of the suspicion I have that a certain child of my late elder brother, who would have succeeded to his estates, was murdered in infancy by you, Maffeo, at the instigation of my late younger brother — that the Pontiff enjoins on me not merely the bringing that Maffeo to condign punishment, but the taking all pains, a guardian of the infant's heritage for the Church, to recover it parcel by parcel, howsoever, whensoever, and wheresoever. While you are now gnawing those fingers, the police are engaged in sealing up your papers, Maffeo, and the mere raising my voice brings my people from the next room to dispose of yourself. But I want you to confess quietly, and save me raising my voice. Why, man, do I not know the old story? The heir between the succeeding heir, and this heir's ruffianly instrument, and their complot's effect, and the life of fear and bribes and ominous smiling silence? Did you throttle or stab my brother's infant? Come now!

*Inten.* So old a story, and tell it no better? When did such an instrument ever produce such an effect? Either the child smiles in his face; or, most likely, he is not fool enough to put himself in the employer's power so thoroughly; the child is always ready to produce — as you say — howsoever, wheresoever, and whensoever.

*Mon.* Liar!

*Inten.* Strike me? Ah, so might a father chastise! I shall sleep soundly tonight at least, though the gallows await me tomorrow; for what a life did I lead! Carlo of Cesena reminds me of his connivance, every time I pay his annuity; which happens commonly thrice a year. If I remonstrate, he will confess all to the good bishop — you!

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101. **Forli**, a city of central Italy. 104. **Cesena**, a city near Forli. 129. **soldo**, an Italian coin worth about one cent.

*Mon.* I see through the trick, caitiff! I would you spoke truth for once. All shall be sifted, however — seven times sifted.

*Inten.* And how my absurd riches encumbered me! I dared not lay claim to above half my possessions. Let me but once unbosom myself, glorify Heaven, and die!

Sir, you are no brutal dastardly idiot like your brother I frightened to death; let us understand one another. Sir, I will make away with her for you — the girl — here close at hand; not the stupid obvious kind of killing; do not speak — know nothing of her nor of me! I see her every day — saw her this morning. Of course there is to be no killing; but at Rome the courtesans perish off every three years, and I can entice her thither—have indeed begun operations already. There's a certain lusty, blue-eyed, florid-complexioned English knave, I and the Police employ occasionally. You assent, I perceive — no, that's not it — assent I do not say — but you will let me convert my present havings and holdings into cash, and give me time to cross the Alps? 'Tis but a little black-eyed pretty singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl. I have kept her out of harm's way up to this present; for I always intended to make your life a plague to you with her. 'Tis as well settled once and forever. Some women I have procured will pass Bluphocks, my handsome scoundrel, off for somebody; and once Pippa entangled! — you conceive? Through her singing? Is it a bargain?

[*From without is heard the voice of* Pippa, *singing* —

*Overhead the tree-tops meet,*
*Flowers and grass spring 'neath one's feet;*
*There was naught above me, naught below,*
*My childhood had not learned to know;*
*For, what are the voices of birds*
*—Aye, and of beasts — but words, our words,*
*Only so much more sweet?*
*The knowledge of that with my life begun.*
*But I had so near made out the sun,*
*And counted your stars, the seven and one,*
*Like the fingers of my hand.*
*Nay, I could all but understand*
*Wherefore through heaven the white moon ranges;*
*And just when out of her soft fifty changes*
*No unfamiliar face might overlook me —*
*Suddenly God took me.*

[Pippa *passes*

*Mon.* [*Springing up.*] My people — one and all — all — within there! Gag this villain — tie him hand and foot! He dares — I know not half he dares — but remove him — quick! *Miserere mei, Domine!* Quick, I say!

Scene: Pippa's *Chamber again. She enters it.*

The bee with his comb,
The mouse at her dray,
The grub in his tomb,
While winter away;
But the firefly and hedge-shrew and lob-worm, I pray,
How fare they?
Ha, ha, thanks for your counsel, my Zanze!
"Feast upon lampreys, quaff Breganze"—
The summer of life so easy to spend,
And care for tomorrow so soon put away!
But winter hastens at summer's end,
And firefly, hedge-shrew, lob-worm, pray,
How fare they?
No bidding me then to — what did Zanze say?
"Pare your nails pearlwise, get your small feet shoes
More like" — (what said she?) — "and less like canoes!"
How pert that girl was! — would I be those pert
Impudent staring women! It had done me,
However, surely no such mighty hurt
To learn his name who passed that jest upon me;
No foreigner, that I can recollect,
Came, as she says, a month since, to inspect
Our silk-mills — none with blue eyes and thick rings
Of raw-silk-colored hair, at all events.
Well, if old Luca keep his good intents,
We shall do better, see what next year brings!
I may buy shoes, my Zanze, not appear
More destitute than you perhaps next year!
Bluph . . . something! I had caught the uncouth name
But for Monsignor's people's sudden clatter
Above us — bound to spoil such idle chatter
As ours; it were indeed a serious matter
If silly talk like ours should put to shame
The pious man, the man devoid of blame,
The — ah but — ah but, all the same,
No mere mortal has a right
To carry that exalted air;
Best people are not angels quite:
While — not the worst of people's doings scare
The devil; so there's that proud look to spare!

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229. **English knave,** Bluphocks. 253. **stars, seven and one,** the Pleiades (consisting of seven stars) and one other.

264. **Miserere mei, Domine,** Have mercy on me, O Lord. *Scene: Pippa's Chamber.* 2. **dray,** nest (usually of a squirrel). 5. **hedge-shrew,** field mouse. **lob-worm,** lugworm, a kind of giant earthworm. 7. **Zanze,** the third girl that waited for Pippa, pp. 184-185. 40. **that proud look to spare.** The "exalted air" of the Monsignor can well be spared.

Which is mere counsel to myself, mind! for
I have just been the holy Monsignor;
And I was you too, Luigi's gentle mother,
And you too, Luigi!—how that Luigi started
Out of the turret—doubtlessly departed
On some good errand or another,
For he passed just now in a traveler's trim,
And the sullen company that prowled
About his path, I noticed, scowled
As if they had lost a prey in him.
And I was Jules the sculptor's bride,
And I was Ottima beside,
And now what am I?—tired of fooling.
Day for folly, night for schooling!
New-year's day is over and spent,
Ill or well, I must be content.
Even my lily's asleep, I vow;
Wake up—here's a friend I've plucked you!
Call this flower a heart's-ease now!
Something rare, let me instruct you,
Is this, with petals triply swollen,
Three times spotted, thrice the pollen;
While the leaves and parts that witness
Old proportions and their fitness,
Here remain unchanged, unmoved now;
Call this pampered thing improved now!
Suppose there's a king of the flowers
And a girl-show held in his bowers—
"Look ye, buds, this growth of ours,"
Says he, "Zanze from the Brenta,
I have made her gorge polenta
Till both cheeks are near as bouncing
As her—name there's no pronouncing!
See this heightened color too,
For she swilled Breganze wine
Till her nose turned deep carmine;
'Twas but white when wild she grew.
And only by this Zanze's eyes
Of which we could not change the size,
The magnitude of all achieved
Otherwise, may be perceived."

Oh, what a drear dark close to my poor day!
How could that red sun drop in that black cloud?
Ah, Pippa, morning's rule is moved away,
Dispensed with, never more to be allowed!
Day's turn is over, now arrives the night's.
O lark, be day's apostle
To mavis, merle, and throstle,
Bid them their betters jostle
From day and its delights!
But at night, brother owlet, over the woods,
Toll the world to thy chantry;
Sing to the bats' sleek sisterhoods
Full complines with gallantry:
Then, owls and bats,
Cowls and twats,
Monks and nuns, in a cloister's moods,
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry!
*[After she has begun to undress herself*
Now, one thing I should like to really know;
How near I ever might approach all these
I only fancied being, this long day—
Approach, I mean, so as to touch them, so
As to—in some way—move them—if you please,
Do good or evil to them some slight way.
For instance, if I wind
Silk tomorrow, my silk may bind
*[Sitting on the bedside*
And border Ottima's cloak's hem.
Ah me, and my important part with them,
This morning's hymn half promised when I rose!
True in some sense or other, I suppose.
*[As she lies down*
God bless me! I can pray no more tonight.
No doubt, some way or other, hymns say right.

*All service ranks the same with God—*
*With God, whose puppets, best and worst,*
*Are we; there is no last nor first.*
*[She sleeps*
(1841)

## CAVALIER TUNES

### 1. Marching Along

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing;
And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song:

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're—

---

47. **in . . . trim,** dressed for travel. 70. **the Brenta,** a river of northern Italy. 88. **mavis, merle, and throstle,** songthrush, blackbird, and thrush.

94. **compline,** an ecclesiastical term—the last of the canonical hours. 96. **twat,** part of a nun's garb, corresponding to the cowl of a monk.

*Cavalier Tunes.* The three songs under this title express the loyalty of the Cavaliers to King Charles I of England (1625-49) and their contempt for his Puritan enemies.

*Marching Along.* 2. **the crop-headed Parliament,** the Parliament of 1640, controlled by the Puritans, who wore their hair short in protest against the vain fashion of the Cavaliers, who wore their hair long and in curls. The Puritans were called "Roundheads." 7. **Pym,** John Pym (1584-1643), a leader of Parliament against the king.

CHORUS —

*Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
*Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.*

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell.
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here,

CHORUS —

*Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
*Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?*

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

CHORUS —

*March we along, fifty-score strong,*
*Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.*

### 2. GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse; here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHORUS —

*King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
*King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?*
*Give a rouse; here's, in hell's despite now,*
*King Charles.*

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else,
While Noll's damned troopers shot him?

CHORUS —

*King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
*King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?*
*Give a rouse; here's, in hell's despite now,*
*King Charles.*

### 3. BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray.

CHORUS —

*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay —

CHORUS—

*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"*

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array;
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,

CHORUS —

*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"*

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counselors; what counsel they?

CHORUS —

*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"*

(1842)

## THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR

As I ride, as I ride,
With a full heart for my guide,
So its tide rocks my side,
As I ride, as I ride,

---

14. **Hampden,** John Hampden (1594-1643), associated with Pym in Parliament in opposition to the king. 15. **Hazelrig, Fiennes, young Harry.** The Puritans were aided by Sir Arthur Hazelrig, Nathaniel Fiennes, and Sir Henry Vane, son of the elder Sir Henry Vane, one of Charles's secretaries. Young Harry was Governor of Massachusetts Bay, 1636-37. He was executed for treason after the accession of Charles II. 16. **Rupert,** Rupert, Prince of Bavaria (1619-82), a nephew of Charles I. 23. **Nottingham.** The first stand of the Royalists was made at Nottingham, a city in central England in August, 1642.

*Give a Rouse.* Title: **rouse,** a shout that accompanies drinking.

16. **Noll,** a contemptuous nickname for Cromwell, leader of the Puritans.

*Boot and Saddle.* This song is supposed to be sung by a Royalist nobleman who is riding to rescue Castle Brancepeth, near Durham, from an attack of the Roundheads, or Puritans. His wife Gertrude held the castle.

*Through the Metidja.* The speaker of the poem is an Arab who is riding through the great Metidja Plain in Algeria to join his chieftain Abd-el-Kadr (1807-83), who at the head of

That, as I were double-eyed,
He, in whom our Tribes confide,
Is descried, ways untried,
As I ride, as I ride.

As I ride, as I ride
To our Chief and his Allied,
Who dares chide my heart's pride
As I ride, as I ride?
Or are witnesses denied —
Through the desert waste and wide
Do I glide unespied
As I ride, as I ride?

As I ride, as I ride,
When an inner voice has cried,
The sands slide, nor abide
(As I ride, as I ride)
O'er each visioned homicide
That came vaunting (has he lied?)
To reside — where he died,
As I ride, as I ride.

As I ride, as I ride,
Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,
Yet his hide, streaked and pied,
As I ride, as I ride,
Shows where sweat has sprung and dried
— Zebra-footed, ostrich-thighed —
How has vied stride with stride
As I ride, as I ride!

As I ride, as I ride,
Could I loose what Fate has tied,
Ere I pried, she should hide
(As I ride, as I ride)
All that's meant me — satisfied
When the Prophet and the Bride
Stop veins I'd have subside
As I ride, as I ride!
(1842)

## RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI

I

I know a Mount, the gracious Sun perceives
First, when he visits, last, too, when he leaves
The world; and, vainly favored, it repays
The day-long glory of his steadfast gaze
By no change of its large calm front of snow.
And underneath the Mount, a Flower I know,
He cannot have perceived, that changes ever
At his approach; and, in the lost endeavor
To live his life, has parted, one by one,
With all a flower's true graces, for the grace
Of being but a foolish mimic sun,
With ray-like florets round a disk-like face.
Men nobly call by many a name the Mount
As over many a land of theirs its large
Calm front of snow like a triumphal targe
Is reared, and still with old names, fresh names vie,
Each to its proper praise and own account:
Men call the Flower the Sunflower, sportively.

2

Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold look
Across the waters to this twilight nook —
The far sad waters, Angel, to this nook!

3

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East indeed?
Go! — saying ever as thou dost proceed,
That I, French Rudel, choose for my device
A sunflower outspread like a sacrifice
Before its idol. See! These inexpert
And hurried fingers could not fail to hurt
The woven picture; 'tis a woman's skill
Indeed; but nothing baffled me, so, ill
Or well, the work is finished. Say, men feed
On songs I sing, and therefore bask the bees
On my flower's breast as on a platform broad;
But, as the flower's concern is not for these
But solely for the sun, so men applaud
In vain this Rudel, he not looking here
But to the East — the East! Go, say this, Pilgrim dear!
(1842)

## CRISTINA

She should never have looked at me
  If she meant I should not love her!
There are plenty — men, you call such,
  I suppose — she may discover
All her soul to, if she pleases,
  And yet leave much as she found them;
But I'm not so, and she knew it
  When she fixed me, glancing round them.

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
  But I can't tell (there's my weakness)
What her look said! — no vile cant, sure,
  About "need to strew the bleakness

---

allied tribes is resisting a French invasion. As he gallops along, his spiritual fervor reveals Mohammed (line 6) in a new light. The rider rejoices in his visions of the dead bodies of the slain Frenchmen, buried in the desert and seemingly uncovered by the shifting sands. His own future is concealed, but he will be content to accept death when Mohammed pleases. Or the last stanza may mean that Fate will be satisfied when Mohammed allows the rider to slay his enemies.

*Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli.* See Critical Notes.

17. **proper,** own. 28. **'tis a woman's skill,** the weaving requires the skill of a woman.

*Cristina.* Maria Christina (1806-78) was the daughter of Francis I, king of Sicily. In 1829 she married Ferdinand VII, king of Spain, and upon his death in 1833 she became queen dowager. Before her marriage she had the reputation of being a coquette and a political intriguer.

Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,
That the sea feels" — no "strange yearning
That such souls have, most to lavish
Where there's chance of least returning."

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure though seldom, are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

There are flashes struck from midnights,
There are fire-flames noondays kindle,
Whereby piled-up honors perish,
Whereby swollen ambitions dwindle,
While just this or that poor impulse,
Which for once had play unstifled,
Seems the sole work of a lifetime,
That away the rest have trifled.

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
As she fixed me, she felt clearly,
Ages past the soul existed,
Here an age 'tis resting merely,
And hence fleets again for ages,
While the true end, sole and single,
It stops here for is, this love-way,
With some other soul to mingle?

Else it loses what it lived for,
And eternally must lose it;
Better ends may be in prospect,
Deeper blisses (if you choose it),
But this life's end and this love-bliss
Have been lost here. Doubt you whether
This she felt as, looking at me,
Mine and her souls rushed together?

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment,
The world's honors, in derision,
Trampled out the light forever;
Never fear but there's provision
Of the devil's to quench knowledge
Lest we walk the earth in rapture!
— Making those who catch God's secret
Just so much more prize their capture!

Such am I; the secret's mine now!
She has lost me, I have gained her;
Her soul's mine: and thus, grown perfect,
I shall pass my life's remainder.
Life will just hold out the proving
Both our powers, alone and blended;
And then, come the next life quickly!
This world's use will have been ended.
(1842)

## INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

vivid sketch

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon;
A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall,
Let once my army-leader Lannes
Waver at yonder wall" —
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy;
You hardly could suspect —
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came through)
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace
We've got you Ratisbon!
The Marshal's in the market-place,
And you'll be there anon
To see your flag-bird flap his vans
Where I, to heart's desire,
Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
Soared up again like fire.

The chief's eye flashed; but presently
Softened itself, as sheathes
A film the mother-eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes;
"You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
Touched to the quick, he said:
"I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.
(1842)

## SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

Gr-r-r — there go, my heart's abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!

---

*Incident of the French Camp.* The incident is said to be true, but the actual hero was a man. Ratisbon, a city in Bavaria, was taken by Napoleon in 1809.

11. **Lannes**, Jean Lannes (1769-1809), a distinguished marshal of Napoleon. 29. **flag-bird**, eagle.

What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims —
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together:
*Salve tibi!* I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
*Not a plenteous cork-crop; scarcely*
*Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt;*
*What's the Latin name for "parsley"?*
What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps —
Marked with L for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)

*Saint*, forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs
— Can't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
(That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp —
In three sips the Arian frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp.

Oh, those melons! If he's able
We're to have a feast! so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange! — And I, too, at such trouble
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails:
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to hell, a Manichee?

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On gray paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe;
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in 't?

Or, there's Satan! — one might venture
Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the indenture
As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine* . . .
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ*,
*Ave, Virgo!* Gr-r-r — you swine!

(1842)

## MY LAST DUCHESS

### FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek; perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps

---

10. **Salve tibi,** hail to thee. 14. **oak-galls,** oak apples, produced on the leaves of the oak. Some varieties contain tannic acid, valuable in commerce. 31. **Barbary corsair.** Barbary includes the countries on the north coast of Africa. A corsair was originally a Turkish or Saracen pirate. 39. **Arian,** a follower of Arius, a fourth-century priest who held that Christ is not the Eternal Son of God, and who denied the Trinity. 49. **text in Galatians,** probably a reference to *Galatians*, 5:19-21, which enumerates seventeen "works of the flesh" and states that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." See also *Galatians*, 3:10 for another possible reference.

56. **Manichee,** a believer in the doctrines of Manichaeus, a Persian of the third century, who held that man's body is the product of evil and his soul the product of good. 60. **Belial's,** the devil's. 70. **Hy, Zy, Hine,** sounds made by the vesper bells. 71-72. **Plena . . . Virgo,** Hail, Virgin, full of grace (a form of prayer used when the vesper bell sounds).

*My Last Duchess.* The speaker in this poem is a duke of Ferrara, a famous Italian city in northern Italy, near Venice. He is negotiating with an envoy for the hand of the Count's daughter. This is one of Browning's most famous dramatic monologues.

3. **Frà Pandolf,** Brother Pandolf, an imaginary painter represented as a monk.

Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat." Such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,— good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — which I have not — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let
taught
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse—
E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretense
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me! (1842)

## IN A GONDOLA

*He sings:*

I send my heart up to thee, all my heart
In this my singing.
For the stars help me, and the sea bears part;
The very night is clinging
Closer to Venice' streets to leave one space
Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee its dwelling place.

*She speaks:*

Say after me, and try to say
My very words, as if each word
Came from you of your own accord,
In your own voice, in your own way:
"This woman's heart and soul and brain
Are mine as much as this gold chain
She bids me wear; which" (say again)
"I choose to make by cherishing
A precious thing, or choose to fling
Over the boat-side, ring by ring."
And yet once more say — no word more!
Since words are only words. Give o'er!

Unless you call me, all the same,
Familiarly by my pet name,
Which if the Three should hear you call,
And me reply to, would proclaim
At once our secret to them all.
Ask of me, too, command me, blame —
Do, break down the partition-wall
'Twixt us, the daylight world beholds
Curtained in dusk and splendid folds!
What's left but — all of me to take?
I am the Three's; prevent them, slake
Your thirst! 'Tis said, the Arab sage,
In practicing with gems, can loose
Their subtle spirit in his cruce
And leave but ashes; so, sweet mage,
Leave them my ashes when thy use
Sucks out my soul, thy heritage!

*He sings:*

Past we glide, and past, and past!
What's that poor Agnese doing
Where they make the shutters fast?
Gray Zanobi's just a-wooing
To his couch the purchased bride;
Past we glide!

Past we glide, and past, and past!
Why's the Pucci Palace flaring
Like a beacon to the blast?
Guests by hundreds, not one caring

---

45-46. **commands . . . together.** In response to an inquiry from Professor Corson (*Introduction to Browning*), Browning said that he meant that "the commands were that she should be put to death, or he might have had her shut up in a convent." 54. **Neptune,** the god of the sea. 56. **Claus of Innsbruck,** an imaginary sculptor. Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol in Austria, is noted for its bronze work on the tomb of the Emperor Maximilian (1459-1519).

*In a Gondola.* See Critical Notes.
22. **the three,** Paul, Gian, and Himself (see note on ll. 106-107). 33. **cruce,** crucible. 34. **mage,** magician.

If the dear host's neck were wried;
  Past we glide!

*She sings:*

The moth's kiss, first!
Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up; so, here and there
You brush it, till I grow aware
Who wants me, and wide ope I burst.

The bee's kiss, now!
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday,
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow.

*He sings:*

What are we two?
I am a Jew,
And carry thee, farther than friends can pursue,
To a feast of our tribe;
Where they need thee to bribe
The devil that blasts them unless he imbibe
Thy — Scatter the vision forever! And now,
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!

Say again, what we are?
The sprite of a star,
I lure thee above where the destinies bar
My plumes their full play
Till a ruddier ray
Than my pale one announce there is withering away
Some — Scatter the vision forever! And now,
As of old, I am I, thou art thou!

*He muses:*

Oh, which were best, to roam or rest?
The land's lap or the water's breast?
To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves,
Or swim in lucid shallows just
Eluding water-lily leaves,
An inch from Death's black fingers, thrust
To lock you, whom release he must;
Which life were best on summer eves?

*He speaks, musing:*

Lie back; could thought of mine improve you?
From this shoulder let there spring
A wing; from this, another wing;
Wings, not legs and feet, shall move you!
Snow-white must they spring, to blend
With your flesh, but I intend
They shall deepen to the end,
Broader, into burning gold,
Till both wings crescent-wise enfold
Your perfect self, from 'neath your feet
To o'er your head, where, lo, they meet
As if a million sword-blades hurled
Defiance from you to the world!

Rescue me thou, the only real!
And scare away this mad ideal
That came, nor motions to depart!
Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art!

*Still he muses:*

What if the Three should catch at last
Thy serenader? While there's cast
Paul's cloak about my head, and fast
Gian pinions me, Himself has past
His stylet through my back; I reel;
And — is it thou I feel?

They trail me, these three godless knaves,
Past every church that saints and saves,
Nor stop till, where the cold sea raves
By Lido's wet accursèd graves,
They scoop mine, roll me to its brink,
And — on thy breast I sink!

*She replies, musing:*

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side, elbow-deep,
As I do — thus; were death so unlike sleep,
Caught this way? Death's to fear from flame or steel,
Or poison doubtless; but from water — feel!

Go find the bottom! Would you stay me? There!
Now pluck a great blade of that ribbon-grass
To plait in where the foolish jewel was,
I flung away; since you have praised my hair,
'Tis proper to be choice in what I wear.

*He speaks:*

Row home? must we row home? Too surely
Know I where its front's demurely
Over the Giudecca piled;
Window just with window mating,
Door on door exactly waiting,
All's the set face of a child;
But behind it, where's a trace
Of the staidness and reserve,
And formal lines without a curve,
In the same child's playing-face?
No two windows look one way
O'er the small sea-water thread
Below them. Ah, the autumn day
I, passing, saw you overhead!

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106-107. **Paul's . . . past.** Paul and Gian are friends or relatives of Himself, the lady's husband. 113. **Lido's . . . graves,** the ancient graves of Jews at Lido, near Venice. 127. **the Giudecca,** one of the canals of Venice.

First, out a cloud of curtain blew,
Then a sweet cry, and last came you —
To catch your lory that must needs
Escape just then, of all times then,
To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds,
And make me happiest of men.
I scarce could breathe to see you reach
So far back o'er the balcony
To catch him ere he climbed too high
Above you in the Smyrna peach,
That quick the round smooth cord of gold,
This coiled hair on your head, unrolled,
Fell down you like a gorgeous snake
The Roman girls were wont, of old,
When Rome there was, for coolness' sake
To let lie curling o'er their bosoms.
Dear lory, may his beak retain
Ever its delicate rose stain
As if the wounded lotus-blossoms
Had marked their thief to know again!

Stay longer yet, for others' sake
Than mine! What should your chamber do?
— With all its rarities that ache
In silence while day lasts, but wake
At night-time and their life renew,
Suspended just to pleasure you
Who brought against their will together
These objects, and, while day lasts, weave
Around them such a magic tether
That dumb they look; your harp, believe,
With all the sensitive tight strings
Which dare not speak, now to itself
Breathes slumberously, as if some elf
Went in and out the chords, his wings
Make murmur wheresoe'er they graze,
As an angel may, between the maze
Of midnight palace-pillars, on
And on, to sow God's plagues, have gone
Through guilty glorious Babylon.
And while such murmurs flow, the nymph
Bends o'er the harp-top from her shell
As the dry limpet for the lymph
Come with a tune he knows so well.
And how your statues' hearts must swell!
And how your pictures must descend
To see each other, friend with friend!
Oh, could you take them by surprise,
You'd find Schidone's eager Duke
Doing the quaintest courtesies
To that prim saint by Haste-thee-Luke!
And, deeper into her rock den,
Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen
You'd find retreated from the ken
Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser —
As if the Tizian thinks of her,
And is not, rather, gravely bent
On seeing for himself what toys
Are these, his progeny invent,
What litter now the board employs
Whereon he signed a document
That got him murdered! Each enjoys
Its night so well, you cannot break
The sport up, so, indeed must make
More stay with me, for others' sake.

*She speaks:*

Tomorrow, if a harp-string, say,
Is used to tie the jasmine back
That overfloods my room with sweets,
Contrive your Zorzi somehow meets
My Zanze! If the ribbon's black,
The Three are watching; keep away!

Your gondola — let Zorzi wreathe
A mesh of water-weeds about
Its prow, as if he unaware
Had struck some quay or bridge-foot stair!
That I may throw a paper out
As you and he go underneath.

There's Zanze's vigilant taper; safe are we.
Only one minute more tonight with me?
Resume your past self of a month ago!
Be you the bashful gallant; I will be
The lady with the colder breast than snow.
Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch my hand
More than I touch yours when I step to land,
And say, "All thanks, Siora!" —
Heart to heart
And lips to lips! Yet once more, ere we part,
Clasp me and make me thine, as mine thou art!

*He is surprised, and stabbed.*

It was ordained to be so, sweet! — and best
Comes now, beneath thine eyes, upon thy breast.
Still kiss me! Care not for the cowards! Care
Only to put aside thy beauteous hair
My blood will hurt! The Three, I do not scorn
To death, because they never lived; but I
Have lived indeed, and so — (yet one more kiss) — can die!
(1842)

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141. **lory,** a kind of parrot. 148. **the Smyrna peach,** a peach tree native of Smyrna, a province of Turkey. 151-154. **snake . . . bosoms.** Various classical authors—Lucian, Pliny, Cicero, Seneca, and others—speak of snakes being kept as pets in both Greece and Rome. Cf. Martial, 7, 87.—"If Glaucilla twines a cold serpent round her neck." 177. **Babylon,** the capital of the ancient empire of Babylon, noted for its wealth and wickedness. 180-181. **the dry limpet . . . well,** the dry limpet on the rock or shore extends himself from his shell as he hears the familiar sound of water. 186. **Schidone's eager Duke,** a painting by Bartolommeo Schidone (1560-1616), an Italian artist. 188. **Haste-thee-Luke,** Luca Giordana (1632-1705), a painter of Naples. The nickname came from the fact that he was constantly being urged by his father to hurry. 190. **Castelfranco,** Giorgio Barbarelli (1478-1511), a painter born at Castelfranco, in northern Italy. 192. **Ser,** an Italian title of courtesy, like *sir* or *gentleman.* 193. **Tizian,** Tiziano Vecellio (1477-1576), a famous Venetian painter surnamed "Il Divino." 206-207. **Zorzi, Zanze.** Zorzi was his servant, Zanze hers. 222. **Siora,** Venetian for the Italian *Signora,* Lady.

## THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

### A CHILD'S STORY

1

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

2

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

3

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking.
"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation — shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease?
Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

4

An hour they sat in council;
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell,
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain —
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh, for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber-door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous),
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

5

"Come in!" — the Mayor cried, looking bigger;
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin;
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one, "It's as my great-grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

6

He advanced to the council-table;
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same check;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarm of gnats;

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*The Pied Piper of Hamelin.* This poem is based upon an old legend found in many forms, all dealing with the attempt to cheat a magician out of his promised reward. (See Brewer's *Reader's Handbook* under "Pied Piper.") Browning wrote the poem to amuse Willy (line 300), the son of the famous actor William Macready (1793-1873). The boy was ill and desired a subject for which he could make illustrations.

1. **Brunswick**, a state in north-central Germany. 24. **Corporation**, the governing body of the city. 37. **guilder**, a coin worth about forty cents.

89. **Cham**, the title of the ruler of the Tartar Empire in Central Asia.

I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats;
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One? fifty thousand!" — was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

7

Into the street the Piper stepped,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives —
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
— Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary—
Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe,
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, 'O rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!'
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
— I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

8

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!" — when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

9

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

10

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!
I've promised to visit by dinner time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor;
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

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91. **Nizam**, the title of the ruler of Hyderabad, the chief state of India. 123-126. **Cæsar . . . commentary.** At the siege of Alexandria, Egypt, in 48 B.C., Cæsar's ship was captured, and Cæsar had to swim for his life. It is said that he carried with him the manuscript of his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, a record of his campaign in Gaul. 133. **train-oil-flasks**, bottles containing whale oil.

139. **nuncheon**, light lunch. 158. **Claret . . . Hock.** These are all names of wines. 177. **Bagdat**, Bagdad, a city in Mesopotamia, in Asia. 182. **stiver**, a Dutch coin worth about two cents.

11

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a Cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

12

Once more he stepped into the street,
  And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
  And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
  Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

13

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
— Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed;
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop!"
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced and the children followed,
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say —
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

14

Alas, alas for Hamelin!
  There came into many a burgher's pate
  A text which says that heaven's gate
  Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
  Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
  And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
  Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
"And so long after what happened here
  On the Twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six":
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where anyone playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
  To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
  They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same, to make the world acquainted

---

258-260. **A text . . . camel in.** From *Matthew*, 19:24.—"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people who ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbors lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

15

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men — especially pipers!
And, whether they pipe us free fróm rats or fróm mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise! (1842)

## COUNT GISMOND

### AIX IN PROVENCE

Christ God who savest man, save most
Of men Count Gismond, who saved me!
Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it; when he struck at length
My honor, 'twas with all his strength.

And doubtlessly ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have schemed!
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in queen's array
To give our tourney prize away.

I thought they loved me, did me grace
To please themselves; 'twas all their deed;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped
A word, and straight the play had stopped.

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen
By virtue of her brow and breast;
Not needing to be crowned, I mean,
As I do. E'en when I was dressed,
Had either of them spoke, instead
Of glancing sideways with still head!

But no; they let me laugh, and sing
My birthday song quite through, adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs —

And come out on the morning-troop
Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,
And called me queen, and made me stoop
Under the canopy — a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun —

And they could let me take my state
And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
My queen's-day — oh, I think the cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

Howe'er that be, all eyes were bent
Upon me, when my cousins cast
Theirs down; 'twas time I should present
The victor's crown, but . . . there, 'twill last
No long time . . . the old mist again
Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

See! Gismond's at the gate, in talk
With his two boys; I can proceed.
Well, at that moment, who should stalk
Forth boldly — to my face, indeed —
But Gauthier, and he thundered, "Stay!"
And all stayed. "Bring no crowns, I say!

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet
About her! Let her shun the chaste,
Or lay herself before their feet!
Shall she whose body I embraced
A night long, queen it in the day?
For honor's sake no crowns, I say!"

I? What I answered? As I live,
I never fancied such a thing
As answer possible to give.
What says the body when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Strength on it? No more says the soul.

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew
That I was saved. I never met
His face before, but, at first view,
I felt quite sure that God had set
Himself to Satan; who would spend
A minute's mistrust on the end?

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat
Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth
With one back-handed blow that wrote

---

290. **Transylvania**, a region in northwest Rumania, formerly a part of Hungary.

*Count Gismond.* The poem is spoken by a lady of the court of Aix, in Provence, an old province in southeastern France.

73-74. **in his throat . . . lie.** To lie in the throat is to lie abominably. It is therefore more serious to accuse one of lying in the throat than to accuse one of merely lying.

In blood men's verdict there. North, South,
East, West, I looked. The lie was dead,
And damned, and truth stood up instead.

This glads me most, that I enjoyed
The heart of the joy, with my content
In watching Gismond unalloyed
By any doubt of the event;
God took that on him — I was bid
Watch Gismond for my part. I did.

Did I not watch him while he let
His armorer just brace his greaves,
Rivet his hauberk, on the fret
The while! His foot . . . my memory leaves
No least stamp out, nor how anon
He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

And e'en before the trumpet's sound
Was finished, prone lay the false knight,
Prone as his lie, upon the ground;
Gismond flew at him, used no sleight
O' the sword, but open-breasted drove,
Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

Which done, he dragged him to my feet
And said, "Here die, but end thy breath
In full confession, lest thou fleet
From my first, to God's second death!
Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I have lied
To God and her," he said, and died.

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked —
What safe my heart holds, though no word
Could I repeat now, if I tasked
My powers forever, to a third
Dear even as you are. Pass the rest
Until I sank upon his breast.

Over my head his arm he flung
Against the world; and scarce I felt
His sword (that dripped by me and swung)
A little shifted in its belt;
For he began to say the while
How South our home lay many a mile.

So 'mid the shouting multitude
We two walked forth to never more
Return. My cousins have pursued
Their life, untroubled as before
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-place
God lighten! May his soul find grace!

Our elder boy has got the clear
Great brow; though when his brother's black
Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond here?
And have you brought my tercel back?
I just was telling Adela
How many birds it struck since May. (1842)

## THE LABORATORY

### ANCIENT RÉGIME

Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly,
May gaze through these faint smokes curling whitely,
As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy —
Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

He is with her, and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do; they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them! — I am here.

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste,
Pound at thy powder — I am not in haste!
Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things,
Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

That in the mortar — you call it a gum?
Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!
And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue,
Sure to taste sweetly — is that poison too?

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures,
What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures!
To carry pure death in an earring, a casket,
A signet, a fan-mount, a filigree basket!

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give,
And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!
But to light a pastile, and Elise, with her head
And her breast and her arms and her hands, should drop dead!

Quick — is it finished? The color's too grim!
Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim?
Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir,
And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me!
That's why she ensnared him; this never will free

---

124. **tercel**, a male falcon, used in hunting.

*The Laboratory*. See Critical Notes. The phrase *Ancient Régime* (*Old Order*) suggests that the incident here recorded is the kind of thing that happened in the old days. Poisoning was then a favorite means of getting rid of rivals and other objectionable persons. Regular schools of poisoners for this purpose flourished in Italy in the 16th and 17th centuries.

29. **minion**, a dainty or delicate person.

The soul from those masculine eyes — say "no!"
To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

For only last night, as they whispered, I brought
My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought
Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall
Shriveled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

Not that I bid you spare her the pain;
Let death be felt and the proof remain;
Brand, burn up, bite into its grace —
He is sure to remember her dying face!

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose;
It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:
The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee!
If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill,
You may kiss me, old man, on my mouth if you will!
But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings
Ere I know it — next moment I dance at the King's! (1844)

## THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

Morning, evening, noon, and night,
"Praise God!" said Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he labored, long and well;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son,

"As well as if thy voice today
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
Might praise him that great way, and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures alway,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon, and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew;
The man put off the stripling's hue;

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay;

And ever o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear;

"So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways;
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day; he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite;

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

---

*The Boy and the Angel.* This legend presents one of Browning's deepest convictions, expressed in lines 37-38 and 78— namely, in service to God, the humblest is equal with the highest. Cf. *Pippa Passes*, 190-195, page 171. For a variation of the theme, see Longfellow's *King Robert of Sicily.*

25. **Gabriel**, an angel whose duty was to bear comfort and sympathy to man.

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer;

And rising from the sickness drear,
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,
And set thee here; I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel-sphere,
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—
Creation's chorus stopped!

"Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain.

"With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up creation's pausing strain.

"Back to the cell and poor employ;
Resume the craftsman and the boy!"

Theocrite grew old at home;
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died;
They sought God side by side. (1844)

## "HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"

[16—]

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;
"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest,
And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight,
Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,
Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see;
At Düffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be;
And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime,
So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot, up leaped of a sudden the sun,
And against him the cattle stood black every one,
To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
With resolute shoulders, each butting away
The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray;

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back
For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
And one eye's black intelligence — ever that glance
O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!
And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
We'll remember at Aix" — for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank,
As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So we were left galloping, Joris and I,
Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;

---

*How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix.* Ghent is an important city in Belgium, about 100 miles from Aix, or Aix-la-Chapelle, in West Prussia, Germany. The other places mentioned in the poem lie between Ghent and Aix. The date 16— suggests that the incident might have happened in the conflict between the Netherlands and Spain or during the Thirty Years War. See Critical Notes.

5. **postern,** the rear gate of a castle or of a fortified city.

10. **pique,** the pommel of the saddle. 14. **Lokeren,** 12 miles from Ghent. 15. **Boom,** 16 miles from Lokeren. 16. **Düffeld,** 12 miles from Boom. 17. **Mecheln,** near Düffeld. 19. **Aershot,** 15 miles from Düffeld. 31. **Hasselt,** 80 miles from Ghent. 38. **Looz, Tongres.** These towns, and Dalhem (line 41), are off the direct route.

The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;
Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white,
And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!" — and all in a moment his roan
Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone;
And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight
Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall,
Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,
Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is—friends flocking round
As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news from Ghent.

(1845)

## THE LOST LEADER

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
  Just for a riband to stick in his coat —
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
  Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
  So much was theirs who so little allowed;
How all our copper had gone for his service!
  Rags — were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
  Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
  Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
  Burns, Shelley, were with us — they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen —
  He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering — not through his presence;
  Songs may inspirit us — not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done — while he boasts his quiescence,
  Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire;
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
  One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
  One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins; let him never come back to us!
  There would be doubt, hesitation, and pain,
Forced praise on our part — the glimmer of twilight,
  Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him — strike gallantly,
  Menace our heart ere we master his own;
Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
  Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

(1845)

## THE LOST MISTRESS

All's over, then; does truth sound bitter
  As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter
  About your cottage eaves!

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly;
  I noticed that, today;
One day more bursts them open fully—
  You know the red turns gray.

Tomorrow we meet the same then, dearest?
  May I take your hand in mine?

---

*The Lost Leader.* See Critical Notes.

20. **whom,** the people generally, especially the lower classes. 29. **Best fight on well,** addressed to the lost leader.

Mere friends are we — well, friends the merest
Keep much that I resign:

For each glance of the eye so bright and black
Though I keep with heart's endeavor —
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,
Though it stay in my soul forever! —

Yet I will but say what mere friends say,
Or only a thought stronger;
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,
Or so very little longer!

(1845)

## EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES

### FAME

See, as the prettiest graves will do in time,
Our poet's wants the freshness of its prime;
Spite of the sexton's browsing horse, the sods
Have struggled through its binding osier rods;
Headstone and half-sunk footstone lean awry,
Wanting the brick-work promised by-and-by;
How the minute gray lichens, plate o'er plate,
Have softened down the crisp-cut name and date!

### LOVE

So, the year's done with!
(*Love me forever!*)
All March begun with,
April's endeavor;
May-wreaths that bound me
June needs must sever;
Now snows fall round me,
Quenching June's fever —
(*Love me forever!*)

(1845)

deep intensity of feeling

## MEETING AT NIGHT

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

(1845)

## PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

(1845)

## SONG

Nay but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught — speak truth — above her?
Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,
And this last fairest tress of all,
So fair, see, ere I let it fall?

Because you spend your lives in praising;
To praise, you search the wide world over;
Then why not witness, calmly gazing,
If earth holds aught — speak truth — above her?
Above this tress, and this, I touch
But cannot praise, I love so much!

(1845)

X deep feeling
for country

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

(Alfred Noye
Barrel org

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,

---

*Parting at Morning.* This is a sequel to the poem preceding. Here the speaker, the same man, emphasizes the fact that with the morning the need of activity among men comes to him. *Him* in line 3 refers to the sun.

All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower —
Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

(1845)

## HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the Northwest died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me; how can I help England?" — say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

(1845)

## THE CONFESSIONAL

### SPAIN

It is a lie — their Priests, their Pope,
Their Saints, their . . . all they fear or hope
Are lies, and lies — there! through my door
And ceiling, there! and walls and floor,
There, lies, they lie — shall still be hurled
Till spite of them I reach the world!

You think Priests just and holy men!
Before they put me in this den
I was a human creature too,
With flesh and blood like one of you,
A girl that laughed in beauty's pride
Like lilies in your world outside.

I had a lover — shame avaunt!
This poor wrenched body, grim and gaunt,
Was kissed all over till it burned,
By lips the truest, love e'er turned
His heart's own tint; one night they kissed
My soul out in a burning mist.

So, next day when the accustomed train
Of things grew round my sense again,
"That is a sin," I said; and slow
With downcast eyes to church I go,
And pass to the confession-chair,
And tell the old mild father there.

But when I falter Beltran's name,
"Ha!" quoth the father, "much I blame
The sin; yet wherefore idly grieve?
Despair not — strenuously retrieve!
Nay, I will turn this love of thine
To lawful love, almost divine;

"For he is young, and led astray,
This Beltran, and he schemes, men say,
To change the laws of church and state;
So, thine shall be an angel's fate,
Who, ere the thunder breaks, should roll
Its cloud away and save his soul.

"For, when he lies upon thy breast,
Thou mayest demand and be possessed
Of all his plans, and next day steal
To me, and all those plans reveal,
That I and every priest, to purge
His soul, may fast and use the scourge."

That father's beard was long and white,
With love and truth his brow seemed bright;
I went back, all on fire with joy,
And, that same evening, bade the boy
Tell me, as lovers should, heart-free,
Something to prove his love of me.

He told me what he would not tell
For hope of heaven or fear of hell;
And I lay listening in such pride!
And, soon as he had left my side,
Tripped to the church by morning-light
To save his soul in his despite.

I told the father all his schemes,
Who were his comrades, what their dreams;
"And now make haste," I said, "to pray
The one spot from his soul away;
Tonight he comes, but not the same
Will look!" At night he never came.

Nor next night; on the after-morn,
I went forth with a strength new-born.
The church was empty; something drew
My steps into the street; I knew
It led me to the market-place —
Where, lo, on high, the father's face!

That horrible black scaffold dressed,
That stapled block — God sink the rest!
That head strapped back, that blinding vest,
Those knotted hands and naked breast,

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*Home-Thoughts, from the Sea.* Browning wrote this poem one evening in April while on shipboard off the northwest coast of Africa on his first voyage to Italy.

1. **Cape Saint Vincent**, the southwestern point of Portugal, near which in 1797 England won a naval victory over Spain. 2. **Cadiz Bay**, on the southern coast of Spain, east of Cape St. Vincent, where in 1596 an English fleet destroyed the second Spanish Armada. 3. **Trafalgar**, a cape east of Cadiz Bay, off which Lord Nelson won his greatest victory over the French and Spanish fleets in 1805. 4. **Gibraltar**, the famous British stronghold at the entrance to the Mediterranean. It was acquired from Spain by the Peace of Utrecht in 1713. 7. **Jove's planet**, Jupiter.

*The Confessional.* This poem relates an incident as of the period of the persecutions by the Spanish Inquisition of the sixteenth century and later.

Till near one busy hangman pressed,
And on the neck these arms caressed . . . .

No part in aught they hope or fear!
No heaven with them, no hell! — and here,
No earth, not so much space as pens
My body in their worst of dens
But shall bear God and man my cry,
Lies — lies, again — and still, they lie!

(1845)

## THE GLOVE

(PETER RONSARD *loquitur*)

"Heigho," yawned one day King Francis,
"Distance all value enhances!
When a man's busy, why, leisure
Strikes him as wonderful pleasure;
'Faith, and at leisure once is he?
Straightway he wants to be busy.
Here we've got peace; and aghast I'm
Caught thinking war the true pastime.
Is there a reason in meter?
Give us your speech, master Peter!"
I who, if mortal dare say so,
Ne'er am at loss with my Naso,
"Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloudlets;
Men are the merest Ixions" —
Here the King whistled aloud, "Let's
— Heigho — go look at our lions!"
Such are the sorrowful chances
If you talk fine to King Francis.

And so, to the courtyard proceeding
Our company, Francis was leading,
Increased by new followers tenfold
Before he arrived at the penfold;
Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen
At sunset the western horizon.
And Sir De Lorge pressed 'mid the foremost
With the dame he professed to adore most.
Oh, what a face! One by fits eyed
Her, and the horrible pitside;
For the penfold surrounded a hollow
Which led where the eye scarce dared follow,
And shelved to the chamber secluded
Where Bluebeard, the great lion, brooded.
The King hailed his keeper, an Arab
As glossy and black as a scarab,
And bade him make sport and at once stir
Up and out of his den the old monster.
They opened a hole in the wire-work
Across it, and dropped there a firework,
And fled; one's heart's beating redoubled;
A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled,
The blackness and silence so utter,
By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter;
Then earth in a sudden contortion
Gave out to our gaze her abortion.
Such a brute! Were I friend Clement Marot
(Whose experience of nature's but narrow,
And whose faculties move in no small mist
When he versifies David the Psalmist)
I should study that brute to describe you
*Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu.*

One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy
To see the black mane, vast and heapy,
The tail in the air stiff and straining,
The wide eyes, nor waxing nor waning,
As over the barrier which bounded
His platform, and us who surrounded
The barrier, they reached and they rested
On space that might stand him in best stead;
For who knew, he thought, what the amazement,
The eruption of clatter and blaze meant,
And if, in this minute of wonder,
No outlet, 'mid lightning and thunder,
Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered,
The lion at last was delivered?
Aye, that was the open sky o'er head!
And you saw by the flash on his forehead,
By the hope in those eyes wide and steady,
He was leagues in the desert already,
Driving the flocks up the mountain,
Or catlike couched hard by the fountain
To waylay the date-gathering negress;
So guarded he entrance or egress.
"How he stands!" quoth the King; "we may well swear
(No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere
And so can afford the confession)
We exercise wholesome discretion
In keeping aloof from his threshold;
Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold—
Their first would too pleasantly purloin
The visitor's brisket or surloin;
But who's he would prove so foolhardy?
Not the best man of Marignan, pardie!"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,
Than over the rails a glove fluttered,

---

*The Glove.* The incident here related is supposed to be told by Pierre de Ronsard, a famous French poet of the 16th century. The story has also been told by a French writer, St. Croix (1746-1809) in *Essais Historiques sur Paris;* by the German poet Schiller (1759-1805) in *Der Handschuh;* and by Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) in *The Glove and the Lions.*

1. **King Francis,** Francis I (1494-1547), king of France. 12. **Naso,** Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso), a famous Roman poet (43 B.C.-18 A.D.). 14. **Ixions.** Ixion was a king in Greek mythology who loved Hera, queen of the gods and wife of Zeus. She sent him a cloud in her shape, by which he became father of the race of centaurs. For his presumption he was bound in Hades to an endlessly revolving wheel. 34. **scarab,** a large black dung beetle.

45. **Clement Marot,** a famous French court poet (1496-1544) who versified forty-nine of the Psalms, ascribed to David. 50. **Illum . . . Tribu,** that lion of the tribe of Judah. 82. **Marignan,** Melegnano, an Italian town ten miles southeast of Milan. **pardie,** surely (originally an oath, meaning *by God*).

Fell close to the lion, and rested;
The dame 'twas, who flung it and jested
With life so, De Lorge had been wooing
For months past; he sat there pursuing
His suit, weighing out with nonchalance
Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

Sound the trumpet, no true knight's a tarrier!
De Lorge made one leap at the barrier,
Walked straight to the glove — while the lion
Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on
The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire,
And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir —
Picked it up, and as calmly retreated,
Leaped back where the lady was seated,
And full in the face of its owner
Flung the glove.

"Your heart's queen, you dethrone her?
So should I!" — cried the King — "'twas mere vanity,
Not love, set that task to humanity!"
Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing
From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing.

Not so, I; for I caught an expression
In her brow's undisturbed self-possession
Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment —
As if from no pleasing experiment
She rose, yet of pain not much heedful
So long as the process was needful —
As if she had tried in a crucible,
To what "speeches like gold" were reducible,
And, finding the finest prove copper,
Felt the smoke in her face was but proper;
To know what she had *not* to trust to,
Was worth all the ashes and dust too.
She went out 'mid hooting and laughter;
Clement Marot stayed; I followed after,
And asked, as a grace, what it all meant?
If she wished not the rash deed's recallment?
"For I" — so I spoke — "am a poet;
Human nature — behooves that I know it!"

She told me, "Too long had I heard
Of the deed proved alone by the word;
For my love — what De Lorge would not dare!
With my scorn — what De Lorge could compare!
And the endless descriptions of death
He would brave when my lip formed a breath,
I must reckon as braved, or, of course,
Doubt his word — and moreover, perforce,
For such gifts as no lady could spurn,
Must offer my love in return.
When I looked on your lion, it brought
All the dangers at once to my thought,
Encountered by all sorts of men,
Before he was lodged in his den —
From the poor slave whose club or bare hands
Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands,
With no King and no Court to applaud,
By no shame, should he shrink, overawed,
Yet to capture the creature made shift,
That his rude boys might laugh at the gift
—To the page who last leaped o'er the fence
Of the pit, on no greater pretense
Than to get back the bonnet he dropped,
Lest his pay for a week should be stopped.
So, wiser I judged it to make
One trial what 'death for my sake'
Really meant, while the power was yet mine,
Than to wait until time should define
Such a phrase not so simply as I,
Who took it to mean just 'to die.'
The blow a glove gives is but weak;
Does the mark yet discolor my cheek?
But when the heart suffers a blow,
Will the pain pass so soon, do you know?"

I looked, as away she was sweeping,
And saw a youth eagerly keeping
As close as he dared to the doorway.
No doubt that a noble should more weigh
His life than befits a plebeian;
And yet, had our brute been Nemean —
I judge by a certain calm fervor
The youth stepped with, forward to serve her
—He'd have scarce thought you did him the worst turn
If you whispered, "Friend, what you'd get, first earn!"
And when, shortly after, she carried
Her shame from the Court, and they married,
To that marriage some happiness, maugre
The voice of the Court, I dared augur.

For De Lorge, he made women with men vie,
Those in wonder and praise, these in envy;
And in short stood so plain a head taller
That he wooed and won — how do you call her?
The beauty, that rose in the sequel
To the King's love, who loved her a week well.
And 'twas noticed he never would honor
De Lorge (who looked daggers upon her)
With the easy commission of stretching
His legs in the service, and fetching
His wife, from her chamber, those straying
Sad gloves she was always mislaying,
While the King took the closet to chat in —
But of course this adventure came pat in.
And never the King told the story,
How bringing a glove brought such glory,

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96. **Kaffir,** a member of a South African tribe noted as lion hunters.

162. **our brute been Nemean,** referring to a monstrous lion in the valley of Nemea, in ancient Greece, slain by Hercules.

But the wife smiled — "His nerves are grown firmer;
Mine he brings now and utters no murmur."

*Venienti occurrite morbo!*
With which moral I drop my theorbo.
(1845)

## TIME'S REVENGES

I've a Friend, over the sea;
I like him, but he loves me.
It all grew out of the books I write;
They find such favor in his sight
That he slaughters you with savage looks
Because you don't admire my books.
He does himself though — and if some vein
Were to snap tonight in this heavy brain,
Tomorrow month, if I lived to try,
Round should I just turn quietly,
Or out of the bedclothes stretch my hand
Till I found him, come from his foreign land
To be my nurse in this poor place,
And make my broth and wash my face
And light my fire and, all the while,
Bear with his old good-humored smile
That I told him "Better have kept away
Than come and kill me, night and day,
With, worse than fever throbs and shoots,
The creaking of his clumsy boots."
I am as sure that this he would do,
As that Saint Paul's is striking two.
And I think I rather . . . woe is me!

— Yes, rather should see him than not see,
If lifting a hand could seat him there
Before me in the empty chair
Tonight, when my head aches indeed,
And I can neither think nor read,
Nor make these purple fingers hold
The pen; this garret's freezing cold!

And I've a Lady — there he wakes,
The laughing fiend and prince of snakes
Within me, at her name, to pray
Fate send some creature in the way
Of my love for her, to be down-torn,
Upthrust and outward-borne,
So I might prove myself that sea
Of passion which I needs must be!
Call my thoughts false and my fancies quaint
And my style infirm and its figures faint,
All the critics say, and more blame yet,
And not one angry word you get.
But, please you, wonder I would put
My cheek beneath that lady's foot
Rather than trample under mine
The laurels of the Florentine,
And you shall see how the devil spends
A fire God gave for other ends!
I tell you, I stride up and down
This garret, crowned with love's best crown,
And feasted with love's perfect feast,
To think I kill for her, at least,
Body and soul and peace and fame,
Alike youth's end and manhood's aim —
So is my spirit, as flesh with sin,
Filled full, eaten out and in
With the face of her, the eyes of her,
The lips, the little chin, the stir
Of shadow round her mouth; and she
(I'll tell you) calmly would decree
That I should roast at a slow fire,
If that would compass her desire
And make her one whom they invite
To the famous ball tomorrow night.

There may be heaven; there must be hell;
Meantime, there is our earth here — well!
(1845)

## THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

That second time they hunted me
From hill to plain, from shore to sea,
And Austria, hounding far and wide
Her blood-hounds through the country-side,
Breathed hot and instant on my trace —
I made six days a hiding-place
Of that dry green old aqueduct
Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked
The fire-flies from the roof above,
Bright creeping through the moss they love —
How long it seems since Charles was lost!
Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed
The country in my very sight;
And when that peril ceased at night,
The sky broke out in red dismay
With signal fires; well, there I lay
Close covered o'er in my recess,
Up to the neck in ferns and cress,
Thinking on Metternich our friend,
And Charles's miserable end,

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189. **Venienti**, etc., encounter the approaching disease; or, meet trouble as it comes. 190. **theorbo**, a light stringed instrument.

*Time's Revenges.* 22. **Saint Paul's**, a cathedral in London.

*The Italian in England.* The speaker is represented as an Italian patriot of the early 19th century active in one of the uprisings against the rule of Austria. He is a refugee in England. Mazzini (1805-1872), the famous revolutionary leader of Italy, who spent seven years of his exile in England, may well have gone through such experiences as are here related. The poem shows Browning's enthusiasm for Italian liberty. Cf. the story of Luigi and the Austrian police in *Pippa Passes*, III, pages 182-184.

8. **Charles**, Carlo Alberto (1798-1849), king of Sardinia, who had made terms with Austria. In 1831 he dealt severely with Mazzini's "Young Italy" and other patriotic secret societies. In 1848 he took the lead in a revolt against Austrian rule, but was defeated and forced to abdicate. 19. **Metternich**, a noted Austrian statesman (1773-1859), one of the most powerful enemies of Italian liberty.

And much beside, two days; the third,
Hunger o'ercame me when I heard
The peasants from the village go
To work among the maize; you know,
With us in Lombardy, they bring
Provisions packed on mules, a string
With little bells that cheer their task,
And casks, and boughs on every cask
To keep the sun's heat from the wine;
These I let pass in jingling line,
And, close on them, dear noisy crew,
The peasants from the village, too;
For at the very rear would troop
Their wives and sisters in a group
To help, I knew. When these had passed,
I threw my glove to strike the last,
Taking the chance; she did not start,
Much less cry out, but stooped apart,
One instant rapidly glanced round,
And saw me beckon from the ground;
A wild bush grows and hides my crypt;
She picked my glove up while she stripped
A branch off, then rejoined the rest
With that; my glove lay in her breast.
Then I drew breath; they disappeared;
It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone
Exactly where my glove was thrown.
Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me
Rested the hopes of Italy;
I had devised a certain tale
Which, when 'twas told her, could not fail
Persuade a peasant of its truth;
I meant to call a freak of youth
This hiding, and give hopes of pay,
And no temptation to betray.
But when I saw that woman's face,
Its calm simplicity of grace,
Our Italy's own attitude
In which she walked thus far, and stood,
Planting each naked foot so firm,
To crush the snake and spare the worm —
At first sight of her eyes, I said,
"I am that man upon whose head
They fix the price, because I hate
The Austrians over us; the State
Will give you gold — oh, gold so much! —
If you betray me to their clutch,
And be your death, for aught I know,
If once they find you saved their foe.
Now, you must bring me food and drink,
And also paper, pen, and ink,
And carry safe what I shall write
To Padua, which you'll reach at night
Before the duomo shuts; go in,
And wait till Tenebræ begin;
Walk to the third confessional,
Between the pillar and the wall,
And kneeling whisper, *Whence comes peace?*
Say it a second time, then cease;
And if the voice inside returns,
*From Christ and Freedom; what concerns*
*The cause of Peace?* — for answer, slip
My letter where you placed your lip;
Then come back happy we have done
Our mother service — I, the son,
As you the daughter of our land!"

Three mornings more, she took her stand
In the same place, with the same eyes;
I was no surer of sunrise
Than of her coming. We conferred
Of her own prospects, and I heard
She had a lover — stout and tall,
She said — then let her eyelids fall,
"He could do much" — as if some doubt
Entered her heart — then, passing out,
"She could not speak for others, who
Had other thoughts; herself she knew";
And so she brought me drink and food.
After four days, the scouts pursued
Another path; at last arrived
The help my Paduan friends contrived
To furnish me; she brought the news.
For the first time I could not choose
But kiss her hand, and lay my own
Upon her head — "This faith was shown
To Italy, our mother; she
Uses my hand and blesses thee."
She followed down to the seashore;
I left and never saw her more.

How very long since I have thought
Concerning — much less wished for — aught
Beside the good of Italy,
For which I live and mean to die!
I never was in love; and since
Charles proved false, what shall now convince
My inmost heart I have a friend?
However, if I pleased to spend
Real wishes on myself — say, three —
I know at least what one should be.
I would grasp Metternich until
I felt his red wet throat distill
In blood through these two hands. And next —
Nor much for that am I perplexed —
Charles, perjured traitor, for his part,
Should die slow of a broken heart
Under his new employers. Last —
Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast
Do I grow old and out of strength.
If I resolved to seek at length
My father's house again, how scared
They all would look, and unprepared!
My brothers live in Austria's pay —
Disowned me long ago, men say;
And all my early mates who used

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74. **Padua**, an important Italian city, about twenty miles west of Venice. 75. **the duomo**, the most famous church in Padua. 76. **Tenebræ**, Darkness, a religious service in the Roman Catholic Church commemorating the Crucifixion.

To praise me so — perhaps induced
More than one early step of mine —
Are turning wise; while some opine
"Freedom grows license," some suspect
"Haste breeds delay," and recollect
They always said, such premature
Beginnings never could endure!
So, with a sullen "All's for best,"
The land seems settling to its rest.
I think, then, I should wish to stand
This evening in that dear, lost land,
Over the sea the thousand miles,
And know if yet that woman smiles
With the calm smile; some little farm
She lives in there, no doubt. What harm
If I sat on the door-side bench,
And, while her spindle made a trench
Fantastically in the dust,
Inquired of all her fortunes — just
Her children's ages and their names,
And what may be the husband's aims
For each of them. I'd talk this out,
And sit there, for an hour about,
Then kiss her hand once more, and lay
Mine on her head, and go my way.

So much for idle wishing — how
It steals the time! To business now.

(1845)

## PICTOR IGNOTUS

### FLORENCE, 15—

I could have painted pictures like that youth's
Ye praise so. How my soul springs up! No bar
Stayed me — ah, thought which saddens while it soothes!
— Never did fate forbid me, star by star,
To outburst on your night with all my gift
Of fires from God; nor would my flesh have shrunk
From seconding my soul, with eyes uplift
And wide to heaven, or, straight like thunder, sunk
To the center, of an instant; or around
Turned calmly and inquisitive, to scan
The license and the limit, space and bound,
Allowed to truth made visible in man.
And, like that youth ye praise so, all I saw,
Over the canvas could my hand have flung,
Each face obedient to its passion's law,
Each passion clear proclaimed without a tongue;
Whether Hope rose at once in all the blood,
A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace,
Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when her brood
Pull down the nesting dove's heart to its place;
Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up,
And locked the mouth fast, like a castle braved —
O human faces, hath it spilt, my cup?
What did ye give me that I have not saved?
Nor will I say I have not dreamed (how well!)
Of going — I, in each new picture — forth,
As, making new hearts beat and bosoms swell,
To Pope or Kaiser, East, West, South, or North,
Bound for the calmly satisfied great State,
Or glad aspiring little burgh, it went,
Flowers cast upon the car which bore the freight,
Through old streets named afresh from the event,
Till it reached home, where learned age should greet
My face, and youth, the star not yet distinct
Above his hair, lie learning at my feet! —
Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked
With love about, and praise, till life should end,
And then not go to heaven, but linger here,
Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend —
The thought grew frightful, 'twas so wildly dear!
But a voice changed it. Glimpses of such sights
Have scared me, like the revels through a door
Of some strange house of idols at its rites!
This world seemed not the world it was before;
Mixed with my loving trusting ones, there trooped
. . . Who summoned those cold faces that begun
To press on me and judge me? Though I stooped
Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,
They drew me forth, and spite of me . . . enough!
These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,
Count them for garniture and household-stuff,
And where they live needs must our pictures live
And see their faces, listen to their prate,
Partakers of their daily pettiness,
Discussed of — "This I love, or this I hate,
This likes me more, and this affects me less!"
Wherefore I chose my portion. If at whiles

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*Pictor Ignotus.* The title means *The Unknown Painter.* He is placed in Florence, Italy, in the 16th century.

41. **a voice,** the voice of his own peculiar genius.

My heart sinks, as monotonous I paint
These endless cloisters and eternal aisles
With the same series, Virgin, Babe, and Saint,
With the same cold calm beautiful regard —
At least no merchant traffics in my heart;
The sanctuary's gloom at least shall ward
Vain tongues from where my pictures stand apart;
Only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine
While, blackening in the daily candle-smoke,
They molder on the damp wall's travertine,
'Mid echoes the light footstep never woke.
So, die my pictures! surely, gently die!
O youth, men praise so — holds their praise its worth?
Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry?
Tastes sweet the water with such specks of earth? (1845)

## THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH

ROME, 15—

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed; is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews — sons mine . . . ah, God, I know not! Well —
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know —
Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aery dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk;
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,
And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
— Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless; how I earned the prize!
Draw close; that conflagration of my church —
What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sink,
And if ye find . . . Ah, God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah, God, of *lapis lazuli*,
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape, sensuous
Stolen Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . .
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath,
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years;
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black —
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance

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67. **travertine**, a kind of white limestone used for building.

*The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church.* This old church in Rome was named after a virgin, St. Praxed, or Praxedes, a Christian saint of the first century who used her riches in aiding the poor and the persecuted Christians. Both the Bishop and the tomb are imaginary. See Critical Notes.

1. **Vanity**, etc. From *Ecclesiastes*, 1:2.—"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity." 5. **Old Gandolf**, the Bishop's predecessor and rival.

21. **the epistle-side**, the right-hand side as one faces the altar. The left is the gospel-side. 25. **basalt**, a hard rock of dark color. 26. **tabernacle**, a protecting canopy. 29. **Peach-blossom marble**, exceptionally fine marble of a pinkish hue. 30. **pulse**, a fruit mash. 31. **onion-stone**, an inferior greenish marble that easily splits into thin layers like those of the onion. It is called *cipollino*, from *cipolla* (onion). 41. **olive-frail**, a basket used for holding olives. 42. **lapis lazuli**, a valuable blue stone, stolen by the Bishop from his own church. 46. **Frascati**, a wealthy resort near Rome. 49. **Jesu Church**, Il Gesu, the church of the Jesuits in Rome; it contains an image of God holding a globe made of lapis lazuli. 51. **Swift . . . years.** From *Job*, 7:6.—"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope." 54. **antique-black**, Nero-antico, a beautiful black marble. 57. **Pans**. Pan was the god of flocks and pastures. The bas-relief was to contain a curious mixture of pagan and Christian symbols.

re-discovery of the Cla

Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Savior at his sermon on the mount,
Saint Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's moldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me — all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world —
And have I not Saint Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
— That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line —
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the Mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes, for a mortcloth, drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work;
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals, and priests,
Saint Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet—
Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis*, all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas! Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick,
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a visor and a term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask,
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death — ye wish it — God, ye wish it! Stone —
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through —
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row; and, going, turn your backs —
Aye, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers —
Old Gandolf — at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was! (1845)

## SAUL

### I

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,

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58. **tripod,** the three-legged stool on which the priestess of Apollo sat when giving responses to persons consulting the oracle at Delphi. **thyrsus,** the staff used by followers of Bacchus, god of wine. 59. This line refers to Christ's sermon on the mount as told in *Matthew*, 5-7. 62. **Moses with the tables.** The account of Moses and the tables is found in *Exodus*, 24-34. 66. **travertine,** a kind of white limestone. 68. **jasper,** a dark green stone of smooth surface. 74. **brown,** that is, brown with age. 77. **Tully's . . . word,** in the style of Cicero (106-43 B.C.)—that is, the purest classic Latin. 79. **Ulpian,** Domitius Ulpianus (170-228), a noted Roman jurist whose Latin style was evidently inferior to that of Cicero. 82. **God . . . long,** that is, in the sacrament of the Mass. 89. **mortcloth,** a funeral pall. 95. **his.** The Bishop's mind seems to be wandering; St. Praxed was a woman. 99. **elucescebat,** he was famous. The Bishop scorns the form of the word, the classic form being *elucebat*.

108. **visor,** mask. **term,** combined bust and pedestal. 116. **Gritstone,** a kind of coarse sandstone.

*Saul.* This poem is based upon a passage in *1 Samuel*, 16:14-23. King Saul of Israel was troubled with an evil spirit. He was told that he would be cured by music, and hearing that David the shepherd boy could play the harp, Saul sent for him and was cured by the boy's playing. In the poem David is alone with his sheep. He tells the story of his playing before Saul. See Critical Notes.

1. **Abner,** the cousin of Saul and the commander of his army. **thou,** David.

To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

2

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

3

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness — the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion; and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst through the tent-roof, showed Saul.

4

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the center, that goes to each side;
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king-serpent all heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the spring-time — so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

5

Then I tuned my harp — took off the lilies we twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide — those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us — so blue and so far!

6

— Then the tune for which quails on the corn-land will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house —
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

7

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life. — And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey — "Bear, bear him along,
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!" — And then, the glad chaunt
Of the marriage — first go the young maidens; next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling. — And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends? Then, the chorus intoned

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31. **king-serpent**, probably the boa-constrictor, waiting the change that will come with the sloughing of his skin in the spring.

42. **corn-land**, grain-land. 45. **jerboa**, the jumping hare, a small jumping animal of the rat family.

As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here; for here in the darkness Saul groaned.

### 8

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered; and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head; but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang:

### 9

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draft of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was for best'?
Then they sung through their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew
Such results, as from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true;
And the friends of thy boyhood — that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope —
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go),
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them — all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature — King Saul!"

### 10

And lo, with that leap of my spirit — heart, hand, harp, and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for — as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains through its array,
And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the center, was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain — the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate — leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold —
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest — all hail, there they are!
— Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest

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60. **Levites . . . enthroned.** The sons of Levi were priests. An account of the service required of them appears in *1 Chronicles*, 23:24-32. 65. **male-sapphire.** It reveals a star of bright rays. The ruby shows a bright red light at the center.

Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse 'twixt hope and despair,
Death was past, life not come; so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter; 'twas Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean — a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely; so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

## 11

What spell or what charm
(For awhile there was trouble within me), what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him? — Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty; beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good"; still he drinks not; he lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

## 12

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep
Fed in silence — above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, though I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky;
And I laughed — "Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!
Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for." And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus —

## 13

"Yea, my King,"
I began — "thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute;
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree — how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these too, in turn,
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect; yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime — so, each ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth

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135. Pippa had fancies similar to those expressed in this section. See *Pippa Passes*, 104-13, page 170.

A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last:
As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man — so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! Again a long draft of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb — bid arise
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers; whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe — Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid —
For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story — the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's a-wave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave;
So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art!"

14

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure — my shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word —
Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me — till, mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance — God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending — my voice to my heart
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

15

I say then — my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and ever more strong
Made a proffer of good to console him — he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes
Of his turban, and see — the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set before.
He is Saul ye remember in glory — ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, though much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same God did choose
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
And sat out my singing — one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack — till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees,
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak roots which please

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188. **paper-reeds,** papyrus plants, used as paper for writing by the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans.

203. **Hebron,** one of the oldest cities of Palestine, situated on a hill. 204. **Kidron,** a small brook near Jerusalem. 213-214. **ere error . . . communion,** a reference to God's rejection of Saul because he disobeyed the command to destroy all the Amalekites and all their possessions. See the account in *1 Samuel*, 15.

To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace; he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow; through my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power —
All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine —
And, oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
I yearned — "Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
As this moment — had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

16

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more — no song more! Outbroke:

17

"I have gone the whole round of creation; I saw and I spoke;
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork — returned him again
His creation's approval or censure; I spoke as I saw;
I report, as a man may of God's work — all's love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes — and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I think),
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift. — Behold, I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love; I abstain for love's sake.
— What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth appall?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator — the end, what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvelous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Aye, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection — succeed with life's day-spring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now — and bid him awake

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237. **Outbroke.** David first played on his harp (lines 36-60); then he sang (lines 68-190); and finally he spoke (lines 237-312).

From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life — a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended — who knows? — or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

18

"I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive;
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift; thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth;
*I* will? — the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loath
To look that, even that, in the face too? Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my despair?
This — 'tis not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!
See the King — I would help him but cannot — the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would — knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak through me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou — so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown —
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

19

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware;
I repressed, I got through them as hardly, as strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news —
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge; but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth —
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe;
E'en the serpent that slid away silent — he felt the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the vine-bowers;
And the little brooks, witnessing, murmured, persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices — "E'en so, it is so!"

(1845, 1855)

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291. **Sabaoth.** The word literally means *armies* or *hosts*. It indicates the omnipotence of God.

331. **the new law**, i.e., that God is infinite in love as well as in power.

## A WOMAN'S LAST WORD

Let's contend no more, Love,
Strive nor weep;
All be as before, Love,
—Only sleep!

What so wild as words are?
I and thou
In debate, as birds are,
Hawk on bough!

See the creature stalking
While we speak!
Hush and hide the talking,
Cheek on cheek!

What so false as truth is,
False to thee?
Where the serpent's tooth is
Shun the tree —

Where the apple reddens
Never pry —
Lest we lose our Edens,
Eve and I.

Be a god and hold me
With a charm!
Be a man and fold me
With thine arm!

Teach me, only teach, Love!
As I ought
I will speak thy speech, Love,
Think thy thought —

Meet, if thou require it,
Both demands,
Laying flesh and spirit
In thy hands.

That shall be tomorrow,
Not tonight;
I must bury sorrow
Out of sight —

Must a little weep, Love
(Foolish me!),
And so fall asleep, Love,
Loved by thee.

(1855)

## EVELYN HOPE

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass,
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares —
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire, and dew —
And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love;
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few;
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come — at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red —
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush — I will give you this leaf to keep;

See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret; go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.
(1855)

Present & past

## LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop —
Was the site once of a city great and gay
(So they say),
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now — the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to (else they run
Into one),
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'erspreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone —
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now — the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks —
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know, while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away —
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys, bridges, aqueducts — and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force —
Gold, of course.
O heart! O blood that freezes, blood that burns!

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*Love among the Ruins.* 39. **caper,** a low prickly shrub of the Mediterranean region.

41. **houseleek,** a common European plant with leaves clustered in a kind of rosette. 65. **causeys,** causeways — that is, raised roads across low ground.

Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

(1855)

## UP AT A VILLA — DOWN IN THE CITY

(AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY)

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,
Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
— I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh, the city — the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights;
You've the brown plowed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and springs; in the shine such foambows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch — fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem a-tingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons — I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin;
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in;
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the traveling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture — the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.

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*Up at a Villa—Down in the City.* 4. **Bacchus,** the god of wine.

29. **conch,** shell. 32. **cypress.** The cypress, an emblem of mourning, is a common tree in graveyards. 33. **corn,** wheat and other small grains; not maize. 34. **thrid,** thread, fly through. 42. **Pulcinello-trumpet,** the signal of strolling players, announcing the coming of Pulcinello, the clown or buffoon of the puppet show. 43. **scene-picture,** a picture advertising some new play. 44. **liberal thieves,** members of the liberal, or revolutionary, party, working for Italian freedom from Austrian control.

Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover" (the sonnet goes riming), "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes — here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!
*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still; it's the greatest pleasure in life.

But bless you, it's dear — it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still — ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scandals;
*Bang-whang-whang* goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

(1855)

## A TOCCATA OF GALUPPI'S

O Galuppi, Baldassare, this is very sad to find!
I can hardly misconceive you; it would prove me deaf and blind;
But although I take your meaning, 'tis with such a heavy mind!

Here you come with your old music, and here's all the good it brings.
What, they lived once thus at Venice where the merchants were the kings,
Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

Aye, because the sea's the street there; and 'tis arched by — what you call —
Shylock's bridge with houses on it, where they kept the carnival.
I was never out of England — it's as if I saw it all.

Did young people take their pleasure when the sea was warm in May?
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to mid-day,
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you say?

Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red —
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a bell-flower on its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance where a man might base his head?

Well, and it was graceful of them — they'd break talk off and afford —
She, to bite her mask's black velvet — he, to finger on his sword,
While you sat and played Toccatas, stately at the clavichord?

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47-50. **sonnet . . . preached.** The sonnet ranks the Reverend So-and-So with Dante (1265-1321), Boccaccio (1313-75), and Petrarch (1304-74), the three greatest Italian writers; with St. Jerome (340?-420), the most learned of the early Fathers of the Latin Church; with Cicero (106-43 B.C.), the famous Roman orator and statesman; and with St. Paul, the great Christian preacher of the first century A.D. 51. **procession . . . borne,** a religious procession bearing an image of the Virgin Mary. 52. **seven swords.** These symbolize the seven traditional sorrows of the Virgin Mary. These are: (1) her grief at the prophecy of Simeon that a sword should pierce her soul because of her Son (*Luke*, 2:34-35); (2) her affliction during the flight into Egypt (*Matthew*, 2:13-15); (3) her distress at the loss of her Son before finding Him in the Temple (*Luke*, 2:41-51); (4) her sorrow when she met her Son bearing His cross (*John*, 19:17); (5) her suffering at the sight of His agony (*John*, 19:25-30); (6) the wound to her heart when His side was pierced (*John*, 19:34); and (7) her agony at His burial (*Matthew*, 27:58-61). 56. **a new tax upon salt.** A tax was levied upon all country produce brought into the city.

*A Toccata of Galuppi's.* A toccata (Italian *toccare*, to touch) is a musical composition characterized by lightness of tone and freedom of movement. Baldassare Galuppi (1706-85) was a noted popular Italian musician and composer. During his last years he was organist at St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. In the poem the toccato reveals to a scientific Englishman the gay, empty life of Venice of the 18th century. Browning himself was fond of playing Galuppi. *A Toccato* is regarded as one of the finest of his music poems. Cf. *Abt Vogler*, page 278.

6. **St. Mark's,** the great cathedral in Venice. **Doges.** The Doge was the chief magistrate of the city. **to wed . . . rings.** The ceremony of "wedding the Adriatic" was instituted by Pope Alexander III in 1174. He gave the doge a ring in token of the victory of the Venetians over Frederick Barbarossa, emperor of Germany, and desired the doge to throw a similar ring into the sea annually in commemoration of the event. The ceremony denoted that the Adriatic Sea was subject to Venice as a wife was subject to her husband. 8. **Shylock's bridge,** the Rialto, a bridge over the Grand Canal. 18. **clavichord,** an old fashioned instrument with keys and strings, the predecessor of the modern piano.

What? Those lesser thirds so plaintive, sixths diminished, sigh on sigh,
Told them something? Those suspensions, those solutions — "Must we die?"
Those commiserating sevenths — "Life might last! we can but try!"

"Were you happy?"—"Yes."—"And are you still as happy?"—"Yes. And you?"
—"Then, more kisses!"—"Did *I* stop them, when a million seemed so few?"
Hark, the dominant's persistence till it must be answered to!

So, an octave struck the answer. Oh, they praised you, I dare say!
"Brave Galuppi! that was music! good alike at grave and gay!
I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!"

Then they left you for their pleasure; till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly and took them where they never see the sun.

But when I sit down to reason, think to take my stand nor swerve,
While I triumph o'er a secret wrung from nature's close reserve,
In you come with your cold music till I creep through every nerve.

Yes, you, like a ghostly cricket, creaking where a house was burned:
"Dust and ashes, dead and done with, Venice spent what Venice earned.
The soul, doubtless, is immortal — where a soul can be discerned.

"Yours for instance: you know physics, something of geology,
Mathematics are your pastime; souls shall rise in their degree;
Butterflies may dread extinction — you'll not die, it cannot be!

"As for Venice and her people, merely born to bloom and drop,
Here on earth they bore their fruitage, mirth and folly were the crop;
What of soul was left, I wonder, when the kissing had to stop?

"Dust and ashes!" So you creak it, and I want the heart to scold.
Dear dead women, with such hair, too — what's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms? I feel chilly and grown old.

(1855)

## OLD PICTURES IN FLORENCE

The morn when first it thunders in March,
  The eel in the pond gives a leap, they say.
As I leaned and looked over the aloed arch
  Of the villa-gate this warm March day,
No flash snapped, no dumb thunder rolled
  In the valley beneath where, white and wide
And washed by the morning water-gold,
  Florence lay out on the mountain-side.

River and bridge and street and square
  Lay mine, as much at my beck and call,
Through the live translucent bath of air,
  As the sights in a magic crystal ball.
And of all I saw and of all I praised,
  The most to praise and the best to see,
Was the startling bell-tower Giotto raised;
  But why did it more than startle me?

Giotto, how, with that soul of yours,
  Could you play me false who loved you so?
Some slights if a certain heart endures
  Yet it feels, I would have your fellows know!
I' faith, I perceive not why I should care
  To break a silence that suits them best,
But the thing grows somewhat hard to bear
  When I find a Giotto join the rest.

On the arch where olives overhead
  Print the blue sky with twig and leaf
(That sharp-curled leaf which they never shed),
  'Twixt the aloes, I used to lean in chief,
And mark through the winter afternoons,
  By a gift God grants me now and then,

---

19-24. In these lines Browning uses a number of technical musical terms the general meaning of which is made clear by accompanying phrases. 35-43. The quotation in these lines is what the music says to the speaker in the monologue concerning the men and women for whom life meant merely a butterfly pleasure.

*Old Pictures in Florence.* In this poem Browning emphasizes the idea that art is continuous, that each period of art derives from the periods preceding. With this thought in mind, the poet pays homage to the great souls of the past and laments the fact that the world has forgotten them while in the presence of later masters. He stresses also the idea that the spiritual quality of art is far more important than perfection of artistic technique, that the soul surpasses the body as a theme of art. Cf. *Adrea del Sarto*, 97-98, 112-117, 194-197, pages 267, 268.

12. **a magic crystal ball,** a crystal sphere used in fortune-telling. 15. **Giotto,** Giotti di Bondone (1276-1337), the greatest of the early Florentine artists. The bell-tower, or campanile, is that of the Cathedral of Florence. Giotti did not live to complete the tower; it was to have had a spire 100 feet high. See lines 136, 276. 17-18. **Giotto . . . so.** For an explanation of this humorous rebuke, see lines 233-40. 30. **a gift,** the gift of spiritual vision, the power to re-create the past.

In the mild decline of those suns like moons,
Who walked in Florence, besides her men.

They might chirp and chaffer, come and go
For pleasure or profit, her men alive —
My business was hardly with them, I trow,
But with empty cells of the human hive;
—With the chapter-room, the cloister-porch,
The church's apsis, aisle or nave,
Its crypt, one fingers along with a torch,
Its face set full for the sun to shave.

Wherever a fresco peels and drops,
Wherever an outline weakens and wanes
Till the latest life in the painting stops,
Stands One whom each fainter pulse-tick pains;
One, wishful each scrap should clutch the brick,
Each tinge not wholly escape the plaster,
A lion who dies of an ass's kick,
The wronged great soul of an ancient Master.

For, oh, this world and the wrong it does!
They are safe in heaven with their backs to it,
The Michaels and Rafaels, you hum and buzz
Round the works of, you of the little wit!
Do their eyes contract to the earth's old scope,
Now that they see God face to face,
And have all attained to be poets, I hope?
'Tis their holiday now, in any case.

Much they reck of your praise and you!
But the wronged great souls — can they be quit
Of a world where their work is all to do,
Where you style them, you of the little wit,
Old Master This and Early the Other,
Not dreaming that Old and New are fellows;
A younger succeeds to an elder brother,
Da Vincis derive in good time from Dellos.

And here where your praise might yield returns,
And a handsome word or two give help,
Here, after your kind, the mastiff girns
And the puppy pack of poodles yelp.
What, not a word for Stefano there,
Of brow once prominent and starry,
Called Nature's Ape, and the world's despair
For his peerless painting? (See Vasari.)

There stands the Master. Study, my friends,
What a man's work comes to! So he plans it,
Performs it, perfects it, makes amends
For the toiling and moiling, and then, *sic transit!*
Happier the thrifty blind-folk labor,
With upturned eye while the hand is busy,
Not sidling a glance at the coin of their neighbor!
'Tis looking downward that makes one dizzy.

"If you knew their work you would deal your dole."
May I take upon me to instruct you?
When Greek Art ran and reached the goal,
Thus much had the world to boast *in fructu*—
The Truth of Man, as by God first spoken,
Which the actual generations garble,
Was re-uttered, and Soul (which Limbs betoken)
And Limbs (Soul informs) made new in marble.

So you saw yourself as you wished you were,
As you might have been, as you cannot be;
Earth here, rebuked by Olympus there;
And grew content in your poor degree
With your little power, by those statues' godhead,
And your little scope, by their eyes' full sway,
And your little grace, by their grace embodied,
And your little date, by their forms that stay.

You would fain be kinglier, say, than I am?
Even so, you will not sit like Theseus.
You would prove a model? The Son of Priam
Has yet the advantage in arms' and knees' use.
You're wroth — can you slay your snake like Apollo?

---

44. **One,** the spirit of one of the unappreciated early artists, lamenting the decay and the neglect of his frescoes. 50. **They,** the great artists like Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Raphael (1483-1520). 64. **Da Vinci,** Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the famous medieval painter, musician, and engineer. **Dello.** Dello di Niccolo Delli was a painter and sculptor of the early 15th century. 67. **girns,** snarls. (When the influential critic speaks, all the little critics imitate him.) 69. **Stefano,** a pupil of Giotto, called "Nature's Ape" because of his marked realistic tendencies.

72. **Vasari,** Giorgio Vasari (1511-74), author of *Lives of the Most Excellent Italian Architects, Painters, and Sculptors,* a work much used by Browning. 76. **sic transit,** a short form of *Sic transit gloria mundi*—so departs the glory of the world. 81. **If . . . dole,** the remark of a conventional critic. 85. **in fructu,** as fruit. Greek art achieved perfection of the human form in marble. 98. **Theseus,** the subject of a kingly statue in the frieze of the Parthenon, now in the British Museum. Theseus was a legendary hero, son of Ægeus, king of Athens. 99. **The Son of Priam,** Paris, the subject of a portion of the sculptures of Ægina. He is kneeling and drawing the bow, a model of grace and beauty. Priam was the last king of Troy. 101. **Apollo,** a statue of the god of manly youth and beauty, of wisdom, etc. At Delphi he slew an enormous python.

You're grieved — still Niobe's the grander!
You live — there's the Racers' frieze to follow;
You die — there's the dying Alexander.

So, testing your weakness by their strength,
Your meager charms by their rounded beauty,
Measured by Art in your breadth and length,
You learned — to submit is a mortal's duty.
—When I say "you" 'tis the common soul,
The collective, I mean: the race of Man
That receives life in parts to live in a whole,
And grow here according to God's clear plan.

Growth came when, looking your last on them all,
You turned your eyes inwardly one fine day
And cried with a start — What if we so small
Be greater and grander the while than they?
Are they perfect of lineament, perfect of stature?
In both, of such lower types are we
Precisely because of our wider nature;
For time, theirs — ours, for eternity.

Today's brief passion limits their range;
It seethes with the morrow for us and more.
They are perfect — how else? they shall never change.
We are faulty — why not? we have time in store.
The Artificer's hand is not arrested
With us; we are rough-hewn, nowise polished;
They stand for our copy, and, once invested
With all they can teach, we shall see them abolished.

'Tis a life-long toil till our lump be leaven —
The better! What's come to perfection perishes.
Things learned on earth, we shall practice in heaven;
Works done least rapidly, Art most cherishes.
Thyself shalt afford the example, Giotto!
Thy one work, not to decrease or diminish,
Done at a stroke, was just (was it not?) "O!"
Thy great Campanile is still to finish.

Is it true that we are now, and shall be hereafter,
But what and where depend on life's minute?
Hails heavenly cheer or infernal laughter
Our first step out of the gulf or in it?
Shall Man, such step within his endeavor,
Man's face, have no more play and action
Than joy which is crystallized forever,
Or grief, an eternal petrifaction?

On which I conclude, that the early painters,
To cries of "Greek Art and what more wish you?" —
Replied, "To become now self-acquainters,
And paint man, man, whatever the issue!
Make new hopes shine through the flesh they fray,
New fears aggrandize the rags and tatters;
To bring the invisible full into play!
Let the visible go to the dogs — what matters?"

Give these, I exhort you, their guerdon and glory
For daring so much, before they well did it.
The first of the new, in our race's story,
Beats the last of the old; 'tis no idle quiddit.
The worthies began a revolution,
Which if on earth you intend to acknowledge,
Why, honor them now! (ends my allocution)
Nor confer your degree when the folk leave college.

There's a fancy some lean to and others hate —
That, when this life is ended, begins
New work for the soul in another state,
Where it strives and gets weary, loses and wins;
Where the strong and the weak, this world's congeries,
Repeat in large what they practiced in small,
Through life after life in unlimited series;
Only the scale's to be changed, that's all.

Yet I hardly know. When a soul has seen
By the means of Evil that Good is best,
And, through earth and its noise, what is heaven's serene —
When our faith in the same has stood the test —
Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,

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102. **Niobe's**, a statue representing Niobe mourning for her children, slain by Apollo and Artemis (children of Leto, wife of Zeus), because Niobe had expressed pride in having more children than Leto. 103. **the Racers' frieze**, in the Parthenon. The figures of men and horses readily suggest life and action. 104. **the dying Alexander**, a famous piece of Greek sculpture at Florence. Alexander (356-323 B.C.) was the great king of Macedon. 135. **"O!"** When Pope Boniface VIII sought proof of Giotto's skill, the artist with one stroke drew a perfect circle. The Pope thereupon engaged Giotto to adorn the papal palace at Avignon, France. 145. **the early painters**, i.e., of the Italian Renaissance period. 156. **quiddit**, quibble. 159. **allocution**, an authoritative address. 165. **congeries**, aggregation.

The uses of labor are surely done;
There remaineth a rest for the people of God;
And I have had troubles enough, for one.

But at any rate I have loved the season
Of Art's spring-birth so dim and dewy;
My sculptor is Nicolo the Pisan,
My painter — who but Cimabue?
Nor ever was man of them all indeed,
From these to Ghiberti and Ghirlandajo,
Could say that he missed my critic-meed.
So, now to my special grievance — heigh-ho!

Their ghosts still stand, as I said before,
Watching each fresco flaked and rasped,
Blocked up, knocked out, or whitewashed o'er —
No getting again what the church has grasped!
The works on the wall must take their chance;
"Works never conceded to England's thick clime!"
(I hope they prefer their inheritance
Of a bucketful of Italian quick-lime.)

When they go at length, with such a shaking
Of heads o'er the old delusion, sadly
Each master his way through the black streets taking,
Where many a lost work breathes though badly —
Why don't they bethink them of who has merited?
Why not reveal, while their pictures dree
Such doom, how a captive might be out-ferreted?
Why is it they never remember me?

Not that I expect the great Bigordi,
Nor Sandro to hear me, chivalric, bellicose;
Nor the wronged Lippino; and not a word I
Say of a scrap of Frà Angelico's;
But are you too fine, Taddeo Gaddi,
To grant me a taste of your intonaco,
Some Jerome that seeks the heaven with a sad eye?
Not a churlish saint, Lorenzo Monaco?

Could not the ghost with the close red cap,
My Pollajolo, the twice a craftsman,
Save me a sample, give me the hap
Of a muscular Christ that shows the draftsman?
No Virgin by him the somewhat petty,
Of finical touch and tempera crumbly —
Could not Alesso Baldovinetti
Contribute so much, I ask him humbly?

Margheritone of Arezzo,
With the grave-clothes garb and swaddling barret
(Why purse up mouth and beak in a pet so,
You bald old saturnine poll-clawed parrot?),
Not a poor glimmering Crucifixion,
Where in the foreground kneels the donor?
If such remain, as is my conviction,
The hoarding it does you but little honor.

They pass; for them the panels may thrill,
The tempera grow alive and tinglish;
Their pictures are left to the mercies still
Of dealers and stealers, Jews and the English,
Who, seeing mere money's worth in their prize,
Will sell it to somebody calm as Zeno
At naked High Art, and in ecstasies
Before some clay-cold vile Carlino!

No matter for these! But Giotto, you,
Have you allowed, as the town-tongues babble it —
Oh, never! it shall not be counted true —
That a certain precious little tablet
Which Buonarroti eyed like a lover —
Was buried so long in oblivion's womb
And, left for another than I to discover,
Turns up at last! and to whom? — to whom?

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179. **Nicolo the Pisan**, a famous architect and sculptor of the 13th century. 180. **Cimabue**, Giovanni Cimabue (1240-1302), noted for his beautiful Madonnas, was the inspiration of Giotto. 182. **Ghiberti**, Lorenzo Ghiberti (1381-1455), the great Florentine sculptor whose bronze doors of the Baptistery of Florence were said by Michelangelo to be worthy to be the gates of Paradise. **Ghirlandajo**, Domenico Ghirlandajo ("garland-maker"), a famous fresco painter of the 15th century. 185. **as I said before.** See lines 41-48. 192. **quick-lime.** They have been given a coat of whitewash. 198. **dree**, suffer, endure. 201. **Bigordi**, Ghirlandajo (see note on line 182). Bigordi was his family name. 202. **Sandro**, Sandro Botticelli (1457-1515), one of the most famous of Florentine painters. 203. **Lippino**, Filippino Lippi (1460-1505), son of Frà Lippo Lippi, a noted Florentine painter. He was wronged in the fact that others were credited with his work. 204. **Frà Angelico**, the professional name of Giovannia da Fiesole (1387-1455). He was a Dominican friar, the greatest of the distinctly Christian painters. 205. **Taddeo Gaddi**, both an architect and a painter (1300-66). He was the godson and the pupil of Giotto and worked on the campanile after Giotto's death.

206. **intonaco**, the plaster-ground for fresco work. 207. **Jerome**, Saint Jerome (340?-420), the most learned of the early Fathers of the Latin Church. He translated the Bible into the Latin Vulgate. 208. **Lorenzo Monaco**, a monk and a conservative artist of the 14th century. 210. **Pollajolo**, Antonio Pollajolo (1430-98), a Florentine painter, sculptor, and goldsmith. 211. **the hap**, the good luck of finding. 214. **tempera**, paint made by mixing pigment and some substance like white of egg. 215. **Alesso Baldovinetti**, a Florentine painter and worker in mosaic (1422-99). 217. **Margheritone of Arezzo**, a painter, sculptor, and architect (1236-1313). His chief subject was the Crucifixion. 218. **barret**, a little flat cap. 230. **Zeno**, a Greek philosopher of the 3d century B.C. He founded the school of Stoics, noted for their calmness. 232. **some . . . Carlino**, that is, some inane picture by Carlo Dolci, an uninspired artist of the 17th century. 236. **a certain . . . tablet**, a beautiful *Last Supper* by Giotto, lost from the church of San Spirito and found while Browning was in Florence. The poet chides Giotto for allowing someone else to find the treasure. 237. **Buonarroti**, Michelangele.

I, that have haunted the dim San Spirito
  (Or was it rather the Ognissanti?),
Patient on altar-step planting a weary toe!
  Nay, I shall have it yet! *Detur amanti!*
My Koh-i-noor — or (if that's a platitude)
  Jewel of Giamschid, the Persian Sofi's eye;
So, in anticipative gratitude,
  What if I take up my hope and prophesy?

When the hour grows ripe, and a certain dotard
  Is pitched, no parcel that needs invoicing,
To the worse side of the Mont St. Gothard,
  We shall begin by way of rejoicing;
None of that shooting the sky (blank cartridge),
  Nor a civic guard, all plumes and lacquer,
Hunting Radetzky's soul like a partridge
  Over Morello with squib and cracker.

This time we'll shoot better game and bag 'em hot —
  No mere display at the stone of Dante,
But a kind of sober Witanagemot
  (Ex: "Casa Guidi," *quod videas ante*)
Shall ponder, once Freedom restored to Florence,
  How Art may return that departed with her.
Go, hated house, go each trace of the Loraine's,
  And bring us the days of Orgagna hither!

How we shall prologuize, how we shall perorate,
  Utter fit things upon art and history,
Feel truth at blood-heat and falsehood at zero rate,
  Make of the want of the age no mystery;
Contrast the fructuous and sterile eras,
  Show — monarchy ever its uncouth cub licks
Out of the bear's shape into Chimæra's,
  While Pure Art's birth is still the republic's.

Then one shall propose in a speech (curt Tuscan,
  Expurgate and sober, with scarcely an "*issimo*")
To end now our half-told tale of Cambuscan,
  And turn the bell-tower's *alt* to *altissimo;*
And fine as the beak of a young beccaccia
  The Campanile, the Duomo's fit ally,
Shall soar up in gold full fifty braccia,
  Completing Florence, as Florence Italy.

Shall I be alive that morning the scaffold
  Is broken away, and the long-pent fire,
Like the golden hope of the world, unbaffled
  Springs from its sleep, and up goes the spire
While "God and the People" plain for its motto,
  Thence the new tricolor flaps at the sky?
At least to foresee that glory of Giotto
  And Florence together, the first am I!

(1855)

## "DE GUSTIBUS — "

Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees,
    (If our loves remain)
    In an English lane,
By a cornfield-side a-flutter with poppies.
Hark, those two in the hazel coppice —
A boy and a girl, if the good fates please,
    Making love, say —
    The happier they!
Draw yourself up from the light of the moon,
And let them pass, as they will too soon,
    With the beanflowers' boon,
    And the blackbird's tune,
    And May, and June!

What I love best in all the world
Is a castle, precipice-encurled,
In a gash of the wind-grieved Apennine.
Or look for me, old fellow of mine,
(If I get my head from out the mouth
O' the grave, and loose my spirit's bands,
And come again to the land of lands)
In a sea-side house to the farther South,
Where the baked cicala dies of drouth,
And one sharp tree — 'tis a cypress — stands,
By the many hundred years red-rusted,
Rough iron-spiked, ripe fruit-o'ercrusted,

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241. **San Spirito**, a church of the 14th century in Florence. The name means *Holy Spirit*. 242. **the Ognissanti**, All Saints Church in Florence. 244. **Detur amanti**, Let it be given to the one who loves it. 245. **Koh-i-noor**, a famous Indian diamond given to Queen Victoria in 1850. 246. **Jewel of Giamschid**, the fabulous ruby of Sultan Giamschid, owned by the Sofi—the shah of Persia. 251. **Mont St. Gothard**, a mountain range of the Alps. The "worse side" of the range is the side toward Switzerland—that is, out of Italy. 255. **Radetzky**, Joseph Wenzel Radetzky (1766-1858), an Austrian count and governor of the Austrian possessions in Upper Italy. 256. **Morello**, a mountain near Florence. 258. **the stone of Dante**, the stone where Dante often sat in Florence. It was often the place of patriotic gatherings. 259. **Witanagemot**, the name of the famous Anglo-Saxon assembly, the forerunner of Parliament. 260. **Casa Guidi**, a reference to Mrs. Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows*, a long poem which was inspired by love of Italy. (See page 373.) **quod videas ante**, which you may have seen before. 263. **hated house**, the House of Lorraine, which through Duke Francis of Lorraine came into control of Tuscany in 1737. 264. **Orgagna**, a Florentine painter of the 14th century, when Italy was free. He was one of the most noted successors of Giotto.

273. **Tuscan**, the literary language of Italy. 274. **issimo**, a Latin superlative ending. 275. **half-told tale of Cambuscan**, a reference to *The Squire's Tale*, left unfinished by Chaucer. Browning has in mind the unfinished Campanile of Giotto. 276. **alt to altissimo**, high to highest. 277. **beccaccia**, woodcock. 278. **the Duomo's**, the Cathedral's. 279. **braccia**, cubits. (Giotto's plan included a spire 100 feet high. It has never been built.)

*"De Gustibus—"*. The full form of the Latin proverb is *De gustibus non disputandum*—There is no disputing about tastes.

2. **If our loves remain**, if we live after death. 4. **cornfield**, grainfield, wheatfield.

My sentinel to guard the sands
To the water's edge. For, what expands
Before the house, but the great opaque
Blue breadth of sea without a break?
While, in the house, forever crumbles
Some fragment of the frescoed walls,
From blisters where a scorpion sprawls.
A girl barefooted brings, and tumbles
Down on the pavement, green-flesh melons,
And says there's news today — the king
Was shot at, touched in the liver-wing,
Goes with his Bourbon arm in a sling—
She hopes they have not caught the felons.
Italy, my Italy!
Queen Mary's saying serves for me —
(When fortune's malice
Lost her, Calais) —
Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, "Italy."
Such lovers old are I and she;
So it always was, so shall ever be! (1855)

## MY STAR

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled.
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it. (1855)

## ANY WIFE TO ANY HUSBAND

My love, this is the bitterest, that thou —
Who art all truth, and who dost love me now
As thine eyes say, as thy voice breaks to say —
Shouldst love so truly, and couldst love me still
A whole long life through, had but love its will,
Would death that leads me from thee brook delay.

I have but to be by thee, and thy hand
Will never let mine go, nor heart withstand
The beating of my heart to reach its place.
When shall I look for thee and feel thee gone?
When cry for the old comfort and find none?
Never, I know! Thy soul is in thy face.

Oh, I should fade — 'tis willed so! Might I save,
Gladly I would, whatever beauty gave
Joy to thy sense, for that was precious too.
It is not to be granted. But the soul
Whence the love comes, all ravage leaves that whole;
Vainly the flesh fades; soul makes all things new.

It would not be because my eye grew dim
Thou couldst not find the love there, thanks to Him
Who never is dishonored in the spark
He gave us from his fire of fires, and bade
Remember whence it sprang, nor be afraid
While that burns on, though all the rest grow dark.

So, how thou wouldst be perfect, white and clean
Outside as inside, soul and soul's demesne
Alike, this body given to show it by!
Oh, three-parts through the worst of life's abyss,
What plaudits from the next world after this,
Couldst thou repeat a stroke and gain the sky!

And is it not the bitterer to think
That disengage our hands and thou wilt sink
Although thy love was love in very deed?
I know that nature! Pass a festive day,
Thou dost not throw its relic-flower away
Nor bid its music's loitering echo speed.

Thou let'st the stranger's glove lie where it fell;
If old things remain old things all is well,
For thou art grateful as becomes man best;
And hadst thou only heard me play one tune,
Or viewed me from a window, not so soon
With thee would such things fade as with the rest.

I seem to see! We meet and part; 'tis brief;
The book I opened keeps a folded leaf,

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36. **the liver-wing**, the right wing—that is, the right arm. 37. **Bourbon.** Ferdinand II, king of the Two Sicilies, was a member of the House of Bourbon. Browning rejoices that the people of Italy are taking action against the Bourbons. See *The Italian in England*, page 209. 40. **Queen Mary's saying.** The French seaport of Calais was taken from England by the French in 1588, the last year of the reign of Queen Mary. She grieved for the loss so much that she declared that the word *Calais* would be found written on her heart.

*My Star.* This lyric is supposed to refer to Mrs. Browning. The idea expressed is expanded in *One Word More*, lines 187-197, page 276. Cf. the lines from Book I of *The Ring and the Book*, page 298, and *Prospice*, page 295.

4. **Like . . . spar**, like a prism, which reflects different colors from different angles.

The very chair I sat on, breaks the rank;
That is a portrait of me on the wall —
Three lines, my face comes at so slight a call;
And for all this, one little hour to thank!

But now, because the hour through years was fixed,
Because our inmost beings met and mixed,
Because thou once hast loved me — wilt thou dare
Say to thy soul and Who may list beside,
"Therefore she is immortally my bride;
Chance cannot change my love, nor time impair.

"So, what if in the dusk of life that's left,
I, a tired traveler of my sun bereft,
Look from my path when, mimicking the same,
The fire-fly glimpses past me, come and gone?
—Where was it till the sunset? Where anon
It will be at the sunrise! What's to blame?"

Is it so helpful to thee? Canst thou take
The mimic up, nor, for the true thing's sake,
Put gently by such efforts at a beam?
Is the remainder of the way so long,
Thou need'st the little solace, thou the strong?
Watch out thy watch, let weak ones doze and dream!

Ah, but the fresher faces! "Is it true,"
Thou'lt ask, "some eyes are beautiful and new?
Some hair — how can one choose but grasp such wealth?
And if a man would press his lips to lips
Fresh as the wilding hedge-rose-cup there slips
The dewdrop out of, must it be by stealth?

"It cannot change the love still kept for Her,
More than if such a picture I prefer
Passing a day with, to a room's bare side;
The painted form takes nothing she possessed,
Yet, while the Titian's Venus lies at rest,
A man looks. Once more, what is there to chide?"

So must I see, from where I sit and watch,
My own self sell myself, my hand attach
Its warrant to the very thefts from me —
Thy singleness of soul that made me proud,
Thy purity of heart I loved aloud,
Thy man's-truth I was bold to bid God see!

Love so, then, if thou wilt! Give all thou canst
Away to the new faces — disentranced,
(Say it and think it) obdurate no more;
Re-issue looks and words from the old mint,
Pass them afresh, no matter whose the print
Image and superscription once they bore!

Re-coin thyself and give it them to spend —
It all comes to the same thing at the end,
Since mine thou wast, mine art and mine shalt be,
Faithful or faithless, sealing up the sum
Or lavish of my treasure, thou must come
Back to the heart's place here I keep for thee!

Only, why should it be with stain at all?
Why must I, 'twixt the leaves of coronal,
Put any kiss of pardon on thy brow?
Why need the other women know so much,
And talk together, "Such the look and such
The smile he used to love with, then as now!"

Might I die last and show thee! Should I find
Such hardship in the few years left behind,
If free to take and light my lamp, and go
Into thy tomb, and shut the door and sit,
Seeing thy face on those four sides of it
The better that they are so blank, I know!

Why, time was what I wanted, to turn o'er
Within my mind each look, get more and more
By heart each word, too much to learn at first:
And join thee all the fitter for the pause
'Neath the low doorway's lintel. That were cause
For lingering, though thou calledst, if I durst!

And yet thou art the nobler of us two;
What dare I dream of, that thou canst not do,
Outstripping my ten small steps with one stride?
I'll say then, here's a trial and a task —
Is it to bear? — if easy, I'll not ask:
Though love fail, I can trust on in thy pride.

Pride? — when those eyes forestall the life behind
The death I have to go through! — when I find,
Now that I want thy help most, all of thee!
What did I fear? Thy love shall hold me fast
Until the little minute's sleep is past
And I wake saved. — And yet it will not be!
(1855)

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**77. Titian's Venus**, a painting of Venus, goddess of love, by Titian (1477-1576), one of the most illustrious artists of Italy.

## TWO IN THE CAMPAGNA

I wonder do you feel today
As I have felt since, hand in hand,
We sat down on the grass, to stray
In spirit better through the land,
This morn of Rome and May?

For me, I touched a thought, I know,
Has tantalized me many times
(Like turns of thread the spiders throw
Mocking across our path) for rhymes
To catch at and let go.

Help me to hold it! First it left
The yellowing fennel, run to seed
There, branching from the brickwork's cleft,
Some old tomb's ruin; yonder weed
Took up the floating weft,

Where one small orange cup amassed
Five beetles — blind and green they grope
Among the honey-meal; and last,
Everywhere on the grassy slope
I traced it. Hold it fast!

The champaign with its endless fleece
Of feathery grasses everywhere!
Silence and passion, joy and peace,
An everlasting wash of air —
Rome's ghost since her decease.

Such life here, through such lengths of hours,
Such miracles performed in play,
Such primal naked forms of flowers,
Such letting nature have her way
While heaven looks from its towers!

How say you? Let us, O my dove,
Let us be unashamed of soul,
As earth lies bare to heaven above!
How is it under our control
To love or not to love?

I would that you were all to me,
You that are just so much, no more.
Nor yours nor mine, nor slave nor free!
Where does the fault lie? What the core
O' the wound, since wound must be?

I would I could adopt your will,
See with your eyes, and set my heart
Beating by yours, and drink my fill
At your soul's springs — your part my part
In life, for good and ill.

No. I yearn upward, touch you close,
Then stand away. I kiss your cheek,
Catch your soul's warmth — I pluck the rose
And love it more than tongue can speak —
Then the good minute goes.

Already how am I so far
Out of that minute? Must I go
Still like the thistle-ball, no bar,
Onward, whenever light winds blow,
Fixed by no friendly star?

Just when I seemed about to learn!
Where is the thread now? Off again!
The old trick! Only I discern —
Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn. (1855)

## MISCONCEPTIONS

This is a spray the Bird clung to,
Making it blossom with pleasure,
Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,
Fit for her nest and her treasure.
Oh, what a hope beyond measure
Was the poor spray's, which the flying feet hung to —
So to be singled out, built in, and sung to!

This is a heart the Queen leant on,
Thrilled in a minute erratic,
Ere the true bosom she bent on,
Meet for love's regal dalmatic.
Oh, what a fancy ecstatic
Was the poor heart's, ere the wanderer went on —
Love to be saved for it, proffered to, spent on!
(1855)

## ONE WAY OF LOVE

All June I bound the rose in sheaves.
Now, rose by rose, I strip the leaves
And strew them where Pauline may pass.
She will not turn aside? Alas!
Let them lie. Suppose they die?
The chance was they might take her eye.

How many a month I strove to suit
These stubborn fingers to the lute!
Today I venture all I know.
She will not hear my music? So!

---

*Two in the Campagna.* The Campagna di Roma is the large open space that lies around the city of Rome. It is called "Rome's ghost" (line 25), because it is dotted with ruins of ancient cities. It provides an admirable setting for the poem, which expresses the idea that no matter how close love brings two persons, they are still, forever, immutably alone. Cf. Arnold's *Switzerland* (*Isolation*), page 440.

15. **weft,** the cross threads in weaving. 21. **champaign,** the open space of the Campagna.

*Misconceptions.* 11. **dalmatic,** a robe worn by kings and high church officials.

Break the string; fold music's wing:
Suppose Pauline had bade me sing!

My whole life long I learned to love.
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion — heaven or hell?
She will not give me heaven? 'Tis well!
Lose who may — I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they!
(1855)

## ANOTHER WAY OF LOVE

June was not over
Though past the full,
And the best of her roses
Had yet to blow,
When a man I know
(But shall not discover,
Since ears are dull,
And time discloses)
Turned him and said with a man's true air,
Half sighing a smile in a yawn, as 'twere —
"If I tire of your June, will she greatly care?"

Well, dear, in-doors with you!
True! serene deadness
Tries a man's temper.
What's in the blossom
June wears on her bosom?
Can it clear scores with you?
Sweetness and redness,
*Eadem semper!*
Go, let me care for it greatly or slightly!
If June mend her bower now, your hand left unsightly
By plucking the roses — my June will do rightly.

And after, for pastime,
If June be refulgent
With flowers in completeness,
All petals, no prickles,
Delicious as trickles
Of wine poured at mass-time —
And choose One indulgent
To redness and sweetness;
Or if, with experience of man and of spider,
June use my June-lightning, the strong insect-ridder,
And stop the fresh film-work — why, June will consider.
(1855)

## RESPECTABILITY

Dear, had the world in its caprice
Deigned to proclaim, "I know you both,
Have recognized your plighted troth,
Am sponsor for you; live in peace!" —
How many precious months and years
Of youth had passed, that speed so fast,
Before we found it out at last,
The world, and what it fears!

How much of priceless life were spent
With men that every virtue decks,
And women models of their sex,
Society's true ornament —
Ere we dared wander, nights like this,
Through wind and rain, and watch the Seine,
And feel the Boulevard break again
To warmth and light and bliss!

I know! the world proscribes not love;
Allows my finger to caress
Your lips' contour and downiness,
Provided it supply a glove.
The world's good word! — the Institute!
Guizot receives Montalembert!
Eh? Down the court three lampions flare;
Put forward your best foot!
(1855)

## LOVE IN A LIFE

Room after room,
I hunt the house through
We inhabit together.
Heart, fear nothing, for, heart, thou shalt find her —
Next time, herself! — not the trouble behind her
Left in the curtain, the couch's perfume!
As she brushed it, the cornice-wreath blossomed anew;
Yon looking-glass gleamed at the wave of her feather.

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*Another Way of Love.* This poem is spoken by a woman to an indifferent and impatient lover who tires of the monotony of roses always sweet and red. She bids him depart, and adds that to a more appreciative lover she may respond, or on the basis of present experience she may scorn the would-be lover. June symbolizes the speaker.

6. **discover,** disclose. 19. **Eadem semper,** always the same. 32. **June-lightning,** scorn.

*Respectability.* In this poem a lover speaks ironically of respectability that is purchased by paying homage to convention. The scene is laid in Paris.

17-20. **the world . . . glove.** The world will allow the caress if we buy gloves from it—if we pay the price by being conventional. 21. **the Institute,** the Institute of France, a national society established in 1795 to promote science, literature, and art. 22. **Guizot,** François Guizot (1787-1874), a French statesman and historian and a member of the Constitutional Royalist party. **Montalembert,** Charles Montalembert (1810-70), a French publicist and historian and a member of the Liberal party. Guizot disliked Montalembert but welcomed him into the Institute as a matter of convention. 23. **lampions,** lamps, which indicate a place where respectables are gathered; hence you must be conventional as you approach, or be condemned.

*Love in a Life.* This poem and the poem following are supplementary in thought. In the first the lover finds his love always eluding him, like ideals, but he is confident that at any moment he may catch her. In the second poem the lover realizes that he cannot achieve his love, or ideal, but he resolves to devote his life to the quest.

Yet the day wears,
And door succeeds door;
I try the fresh fortune —
Range the wide house from the wing to the center.
Still the same chance! she goes out as I enter.
Spend my whole day in the quest — who cares?
But 'tis twilight, you see — with such suites to explore,
Such closets to search, such alcoves to importune!
(1855)

## LIFE IN A LOVE

Escape me?
Never —
Beloved!
While I am I, and you are you,
So long as the world contains us both,
Me the loving and you the loath,
While the one eludes, must the other pursue.
My life is a fault at last, I fear;
It seems too much like a fate, indeed!
Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.
But what if I fail of my purpose here?
It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
And, baffled, get up and begin again —
So the chase takes up one's life, that's all.
While, look but once from your farthest bound
At me so deep in the dust and dark,
No sooner the old hope goes to ground
Than a new one, straight to the selfsame mark,
I shape me —
Ever
Removed!
(1855)

## IN THREE DAYS

So, I shall see her in three days
And just one night, but nights are short,
Then two long hours, and that is morn.
See how I come, unchanged, unworn!
Feel, where my life broke off from thine,
How fresh the splinters keep and fine —
Only a touch and we combine!

Too long, this time of year, the days!
But nights, at least the nights are short.
As night shows where her one moon is,
A hand's-breadth of pure light and bliss,
So life's night gives my lady birth
And my eyes hold her! What is worth
The rest of heaven, the rest of earth?

O loaded curls, release your store
Of warmth and scent, as once before
The tingling hair did, lights and darks
Outbreaking into fairy sparks,
When under curl and curl I pried
After the warmth and scent inside,
Through lights and darks how manifold —
The dark inspired, the light controlled!
As early Art embrowns the gold.

What great fear, should one say, "Three days
That change the world might change as well
Your fortune; and if joy delays,
Be happy that no worse befell!"
What small fear, if another says,
"Three days and one short night beside
May throw no shadow on your ways;
But years must teem with change untried,
With chance not easily defied,
With an end somewhere undescried."
No fear! — or if a fear be born
This minute, it dies out in scorn.
Fear? I shall see her in three days
And one night, now the nights are short,
Then just two hours, and that is morn.
(1855)

## THE GUARDIAN-ANGEL

### A PICTURE AT FANO

Dear and great Angel, wouldst thou only leave
That child, when thou hast done with him, for me!
Let me sit all the day here, that when eve
Shall find performed thy special ministry,
And time come for departure, thou, suspending
Thy flight, may'st see another child for tending,
Another still, to quiet and retrieve.

Then I shall feel thee step one step, no more,
From where thou standest now, to where I gaze,
—And suddenly my head is covered o'er
With those wings, white above the child who prays
Now on that tomb — and I shall feel thee guarding
Me, out of all the world; for me, discarding
Yon heaven thy home, that waits and opes its door.

*The Guardian-Angel.* The title is taken from that of a painting by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (1590-1666), nicknamed Guercino (line 36), "the squint-eyed." The picture is in the Church of San Agostino at Fano, an Italian city on the Adriatic Sea.

I would not look up thither past thy head
Because the door opes, like that child, I know,
For I should have thy gracious face instead,
Thou bird of God! And wilt thou bend me low
Like him, and lay, like his, my hands together,
And lift them up to pray, and gently tether
Me, as thy lamb there, with thy garment's spread?

If this was ever granted, I would rest
My head beneath thine, while thy healing hands
Close-covered both my eyes beside thy breast,
Pressing the brain, which too much thought expands,
Back to its proper size again, and smoothing
Distortion down till every nerve had soothing,
And all lay quiet, happy, and suppressed.

How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired!
I think how I should view the earth and skies
And sea, when once again my brow was bared
After thy healing, with such different eyes.
O world, as God has made it! All is beauty;
And knowing this is love, and love is duty.
What further may be sought for or declared?

Guercino drew this angel I saw teach
(Alfred, dear friend!) — that little child to pray,
Holding the little hands up, each to each
Pressed gently — with his own head turned away
Over the earth where so much lay before him
Of work to do, though heaven was opening o'er him,
And he was left at Fano by the beach.

We were at Fano, and three times we went
To sit and see him in his chapel there,
And drink his beauty to our soul's content —
My angel with me too; and since I care
For dear Guercino's fame (to which in power
And glory comes this picture for a dower,
Fraught with a pathos so magnificent) —

And since he did not work thus earnestly
At all times, and has else endured some wrong —
I took one thought his picture struck from me,
And spread it out, translating it to song.
My love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
This is Ancona, yonder is the sea.

(*1848;* 1855)

## MEMORABILIA

Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

But you were living before that,
And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at —
My starting moves your laughter!

I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand's-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about;

For there I picked up on the heather,
And there I put inside my breast
A molted feather, an eagle-feather!
Well, I forget the rest.

(1855)

## POPULARITY

Stand still, true poet that you are!
I know you; let me try and draw you.
Some night you'll fail us; when afar
You rise, remember one man saw you,
Knew you, and named a star!

My star, God's glowworm! Why extend
That loving hand of his which leads you,
Yet locks you safe from end to end
Of this dark world, unless he needs you,
Just saves your light to spend?

His clenched hand shall unclose at last,
I know, and let out all the beauty;
My poet holds the future fast,
Accepts the coming ages' duty,
Their present for this past.

That day, the earth's feast-master's brow
Shall clear, to God the chalice raising;

---

37. **Alfred.** The poem is addressed to Alfred Dommett, one of Browning's warm friends, who was then in New Zealand. 43. **We . . . went.** When the poem was written, Browning and Mrs. Browning (the "angel" of line 46) were staying at Ancona (line 56), about 30 miles south of Fano.

55. **the Wairoa**, a river in New Zealand.
*Memorabilia.* The title means *Things Worth Remembering.* Browning first became acquainted with Shelley's poetry about 1825 and instantly fell under its spell.

"Others give best at first, but thou
Forever set'st our table praising,
Keep'st the good wine till now!"

Meantime, I'll draw you as you stand,
With few or none to watch and wonder;
I'll say — a fisher, on the sand
By Tyre the old, with ocean-plunder,
A netful, brought to land.

Who has not heard how Tyrian shells
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes
Whereof one drop worked miracles,
And colored like Astarte's eyes
Raw silk the merchant sells?

And each bystander of them all
Could criticize, and quote tradition
How depths of blue sublimed some pall —
To get which, pricked a king's ambition;
Worth scepter, crown, and ball.

Yet there's the dye, in that rough mesh,
The sea has only just o'er-whispered!
Live whelks, each lip's beard dripping fresh,
As if they still the water's lisp heard
Through foam the rock-weeds thresh.

Enough to furnish Solomon
Such hangings for his cedar-house,
That, when gold-robed he took the throne
In that abyss of blue, the Spouse
Might swear his presence shone

Most like the center-spike of gold
Which burns deep in the bluebell's womb
What time, with ardors manifold,
The bee goes singing to her groom,
Drunken and overbold.

Mere conchs! not fit for warp or woof!
Till cunning come to pound and squeeze
And clarify — refine to proof
The liquor filtered by degrees,
While the world stands aloof.

And there's the extract, flasked and fine,
And priced and salable at last!
And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes, and Nokes combine
To paint the future from the past,
Put blue into their line.

Hobbs hints blue — straight he turtle eats;
Nobbs prints blue — claret crowns his cup;
Nokes outdares Stokes in azure feats —
Both gorge. Who fished the murex up?
What porridge had John Keats?

(1855)

## THE PATRIOT

### AN OLD STORY

It was roses, roses, all the way,
With myrtle mixed in my path like mad;
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,
The church-spires flamed, such flags they had,
A year ago on this very day.

The air broke into a mist with bells,
The old walls rocked with the crowd and cries.
Had I said, "Good folk, mere noise repels —
But give me your sun from yonder skies!"
They had answered, "And afterward, what else?"

Alack, it was I who leaped at the sun
To give it my loving friends to keep!
Naught man could do, have I left undone;
And you see my harvest, what I reap
This very day, now a year is run.

There's nobody on the house-tops now —
Just a palsied few at the windows set;
For the best of the sight is, all allow,
At the Shambles' Gate — or, better yet,
By the very scaffold's foot, I trow.

I go in the rain, and, more than needs,
A rope cuts both my wrists behind;
And I think, by the feel, my forehead bleeds,
For they fling, whoever has a mind,
Stones at me for my year's misdeeds.

Thus I entered, and thus I go!
In triumphs, people have dropped down dead.
"Paid by the world, what dost thou owe
Me?" — God might question; now instead,
'Tis God shall repay; I am safer so. (1855)

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18-20. **Others . . . now.** See note on lines 759-60, p. 146. 24. **Tyre,** a famous city of ancient Phœnicia, on the Mediterranean coast. The Phœnicians discovered the dye mentioned in the lines following. 29. **Astarte,** a Phœnician goddess of love and beauty. 33. **pall,** a rich cloth used as a covering. 38. **whelks,** shellfish. 41-44. **Solomon,** etc. For the description of Solomon's temple and palace, see *1 Kings*, 6-7. 44. **the Spouse,** Solomon's wife, Pharaoh's daughter. 48. **What time,** at the time when. 51. **conchs,** shells. 58. **Hobbs . . . Nokes,** the common run of humanity; like Tom, Dick, and Harry.

64. **murex,** the shellfish from which the famous dye was made. 65. **What . . . Keats?** Browning imagines Keats as the literary fisherman who discovers the rich dye of words and images but gets nothing for it; other poets follow imitatively and get much.

*The Patriot.* This poem contains no direct historical reference. It is called "an old story" because it presents universal truth—the fickleness of popular approval.

19. **Shambles' Gate.** The shambles is a place for slaughtering animals.

## A LIGHT WOMAN

So far as our story approaches the end,
Which do you pity the most of us three? —
My friend, or the mistress of my friend
With her wanton eyes, or me?

My friend was already too good to lose,
And seemed in the way of improvement yet,
When she crossed his path with her hunting-noose,
And over him drew her net.

When I saw him tangled in her toils,
A shame, said I, if she adds just him
To her nine-and-ninety other spoils,
The hundredth for a whim!

And before my friend be wholly hers,
How easy to prove to him, I said,
An eagle's the game her pride prefers,
Though she snaps at a wren instead!

So I gave her eyes my own eyes to take,
My hand sought hers as in earnest need,
And round she turned for my noble sake,
And gave me herself indeed.

The eagle am I, with my fame in the world,
The wren is he, with his maiden face.
—You look away and your lip is curled?
Patience, a moment's space!

For see, my friend goes shaking and white;
He eyes me as the basilisk;
I have turned, it appears, his day to night,
Eclipsing his sun's disk.

And I did it, he thinks, as a very thief:
"Though I love her — that, he comprehends —
One should master one's passions (love, in chief),
And be loyal to one's friends!"

And she — she lies in my hand as tame
As a pear late basking over a wall;
Just a touch to try and off it came;
'Tis mine — can I let it fall?

With no mind to eat it, that's the worst!
Were it thrown in the road, would the case assist?
'Twas quenching a dozen blue-flies' thirst
When I gave its stalk a twist.

And I — what I seem to my friend, you see;
What I soon shall seem to his love, you guess;
What I seem to myself, do you ask of me?
No hero, I confess.

'Tis an awkward thing to play with souls,
And matter enough to save one's own;
Yet think of my friend, and the burning coals
He played with for bits of stone!

One likes to show the truth for the truth;
That the woman was light is very true;
But suppose she says—Never mind that youth!
What wrong have I done to you?

Well, anyhow, here the story stays,
So far at least as I understand;
And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays,
Here's a subject made to your hand!

(1855)

## THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all my life seemed meant for, fails,
Since this was written and needs must be —
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
Who knows but the world may end tonight?

Hush! If you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once—
And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—

---

26. **basilisk**, a fabulous monster said to be able to kill with a look.

Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!
Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? Just as well
She might have hated; who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought—All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
And place them in rime so, side by side.
'Tis something, nay 'tis much; but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rime?
Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown gray
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being—had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life forever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, forever ride?
(1855)

## A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL

### SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes,
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow;
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;

---

81. **burn,** brook.

86. **Greatly . . . intend,** have high aims. 90. **sublimate,** lift to its highest pitch.

*A Grammarian's Funeral.* The speaker of the poem is a disciple of a dead scholar of the early Renaissance, noted for his passion for knowledge. He leads other disciples as they bear the body of their master to the top of a lofty mountain for burial at sunrise. See Critical Notes.

3. **crofts,** enclosed farm lands. **thorpes,** small villages. 7-8. **day . . . rock-row.** The sun's rays are just hitting the rocky tops of the mountains. 12. **in the censer,** in the crater of a smoking volcano.

Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights;
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm and dead,
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather!
He whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless; how should Spring take note
Winter would follow?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished"?
No, that's the world's way (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city!);
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world
Bent on escaping;
"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?
Show me their shaping,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage —
Give!" — So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page;
Learned, we found him.
Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain;
"Time to taste life," another would have said,
"Up with the curtain!"
This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there's the comment.
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!
Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Aye, nor feel queasy."
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts —
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached; there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he'd learn how to live —
No end to learning;
Earn the means first — God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes;
Live now or never!"
He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."
Back to his book then; deeper drooped his head;
*Calculus* racked him;
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead;
*Tussis* attacked him.
"Now, master, take a little rest!" — not he!
(Caution redoubled,
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled,
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.
Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw on God
(He loves the burthen) —
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by instalment.
He ventured neck or nothing — heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:

---

25-26. These lines are directions to the bearers, as are the passages in parentheses in lines 41, 73, 76, 90. 34. **Apollo**, the Greek god of manly beauty and of music. 47. **scroll**, manuscript. This was before the time of books. 50. **he gowned him**, he put on the scholastic gown. 55-72. With these lines compare *Cleon*, 214-20 and 278-83, pp. 271, 272.

86. **Calculus**, the disease called the stone. 88. **Tussis**, a bronchial cough. 95. **soul-hydroptic**, soul-thirsty.

"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes!
Hence with life's pale lure!"
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it;
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit;
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here — should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife;
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business — let it be! —
Properly based *Oun* —
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place;
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews!
Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
Live, for they can, there;
This man decided not to Live but Know —
Bury this man there?
Here — here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects;
Loftily lying,
Leave him — still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying. (1855)

## THE STATUE AND THE BUST

There's a palace in Florence, the world knows well,
And a statue watches it from the square,
And this story of both do our townsmen tell.

Ages ago, a lady there,
At the farthest window facing the East,
Asked, "Who rides by with the royal air?"

The bridesmaids' prattle around her ceased;
She leaned forth, one on either hand;
They saw how the blush of the bride increased —

They felt by its beats her heart expand —
As one at each ear and both in a breath
Whispered, "The Great-Duke Ferdinand."

That selfsame instant, underneath,
The Duke rode past in his idle way,
Empty and fine like a swordless sheath.

Gay he rode, with a friend as gay,
Till he threw his head back — "Who is she?"
—"A bride the Riccardi brings home today."

Hair in heaps lay heavily
Over a pale brow spirit-pure —
Carved like the heart of the coal-black tree,

Crisped like a war-steed's encolure —
And vainly sought to dissemble her eyes
Of the blackest black our eyes endure,

And lo, a blade for a knight's emprise
Filled the fine empty sheath of a man —
The Duke grew straightway brave and wise.

He looked at her, as a lover can;
She looked at him, as one who awakes;
The past was a sleep, and her life began.

Now, love so ordered for both their sakes,
A feast was held that selfsame night
In the pile which the mighty shadow makes.

(For Via Larga is three-parts light,
But the palace overshadows one,
Because of a crime, which may God requite!

To Florence and God the wrong was done,
Through the first republic's murder there
By Cosimo and his cursed son.)

The Duke (with the statue's face in the square)
Turned in the midst of his multitude
At the bright approach of the bridal pair.

---

113-124. These lines express a favorite doctrine with Browning. Cf. *Andrea del Sarto*, page 266. 127. **the rattle**, the death rattle in his throat. 129-131. *Hoti*, *oun*, and *de* are Greek particles meaning respectively *that*, *therefore*, and *toward*. They involve critical points of syntax. 134. **purlieus**, haunts.

*The Statue and the Bust.* See Critical Notes.

22. **encolure**, mane. 25. **emprise**, enterprise. 33. **the pile**, a large building—the Duke's palace. 36. **a crime**, the crime committed by Cosimo dei Medici (1389-1464) and his grandson Lorenzo (1449-92) in destroying the liberties of Florence. Both were absolute lords and rulers of Florence, virtually tyrants.

Face to face the lovers stood
A single minute and no more,
While the bridegroom bent as a man subdued —

Bowed till his bonnet brushed the floor —
For the Duke on the lady a kiss conferred,
As the courtly custom was of yore.

In a minute can lovers exchange a word?
If a word did pass, which I do not think,
Only one out of a thousand heard.

That was the bridegroom. At day's brink
He and his bride were alone at last
In a bed chamber by a taper's blink.

Calmly he said that her lot was cast,
That the door she had passed was shut on her
Till the final catafalk repassed.

The world meanwhile, its noise and stir,
Through a certain window facing the East
She could watch like a convent's chronicler.

Since passing the door might lead to a feast,
And a feast might lead to so much beside,
He, of many evils, chose the least.

"Freely I choose, too," said the bride —
"Your window and its world suffice,"
Replied the tongue, while the heart replied —

"If I spend the night with that devil twice,
May his window serve as my loop of hell
Whence a damned soul looks on paradise!

"I fly to the Duke who loves me well,
Sit by his side and laugh at sorrow
Ere I count another ave-bell.

" 'Tis only the coat of a page to borrow,
And tie my hair in a horse-boy's trim.
And I save my soul — but not tomorrow" —

(She checked herself and her eye grew dim)
"My father tarries to bless my state;
I must keep it one day more for him.

"Is one day more so long to wait?
Moreover the Duke rides past, I know;
We shall see each other, sure as fate."

She turned on her side and slept. Just so!
So we resolve on a thing and sleep;
So did the lady, ages ago.

That night the Duke said, "Dear or cheap
As the cost of this cup of bliss may prove
To body or soul, I will drain it deep."

And on the morrow, bold with love,
He beckoned the bridegroom (close on call,
As his duty bade, by the Duke's alcove)

And smiled " 'Twas a very funeral,
Your lady will think, this feast of ours —
A shame to efface, whate'er befall!

"What if we break from the Arno bowers,
And try if Petraja, cool and green,
Cure last night's fault with this morning's flowers?"

The bridegroom, not a thought to be seen
On his steady brow and quiet mouth,
Said, "Too much favor for me so mean!

"But, alas! my lady leaves the South;
Each wind that comes from the Apennine
Is a menace to her tender youth;

"Nor a way exists, the wise opine,
If she quits her palace twice this year,
To avert the flower of life's decline."

Quoth the Duke, "A sage and a kindly fear.
Moreover Petraja is cold this spring;
Be our feast tonight as usual here!"

And then to himself — "Which night shall bring
Thy bride to her lover's embraces, fool —
Or I am the fool, and thou art the king!

"Yet my passion must wait a night, nor cool —
For tonight the Envoy arrives from France
Whose heart I unlock with thyself, my tool.

"I need thee still and might miss perchance.
Today is not wholly lost, beside,
With its hope of my lady's countenance:

"For I ride — what should I do but ride?
And passing her palace, if I list,
May glance at its window — well betide!"

So said, so done; nor the lady missed
One ray that broke from the ardent brow,
Nor a curl of the lips where the spirit kissed.

Be sure that each renewed the vow,
No morrow's sun should arise and set
And leave them then as it left them now.

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57. **catafalk,** a kind of open hearse or funeral car. 72. **ave-bell,** the bell sounded in the evening or at early dawn when the people repeat the devotional *Ave Maria* (*Hail, Mary*) of the Roman Catholic Church.

94. **the Arno,** the river that flows through Florence.
95. **Petraja,** the Duke's country seat, a villa near Florence.
101. **the Apennine,** a mountain range near Florence.

But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one day more
Ere each leaped over the parapet.

And still, as love's brief morning wore,
With a gentle start, half smile, half sigh,
They found love not as it seemed before.

They thought it would work infallibly,
But not in despite of heaven and earth;
The rose would blow when the storm passed by.

Meantime they could profit in winter's dearth
By store of fruits that supplant the rose;
The world and its ways have a certain worth—

And to press a point while these oppose
Were simple policy; better wait:
We lose no friends and we gain no foes.

Meantime, worse fates than a lover's fate,
Who daily may ride and pass and look
Where his lady watches behind the grate!

And she — she watched the square like a book
Holding one picture and only one,
Which daily to find she undertook;

When the picture was reached the book was done,
And she turned from the picture at night to scheme
Of tearing it out for herself next sun.

So weeks grew months, years; gleam by gleam
The glory dropped from their youth and love,
And both perceived they had dreamed a dream,

Which hovered, as dreams do, still above;
But who can take a dream for a truth?
Oh, hide our eyes from the next remove!

One day as the lady saw her youth
Depart, and the silver thread that streaked
Her hair, and, worn by the serpent's tooth,

The brow so puckered, the chin so peaked —
And wondered who the woman was,
Hollow-eyed and haggard-cheeked,

Fronting her silent in the glass —
"Summon here," she suddenly said,
"Before the rest of my old self pass,

"Him, the Carver, a hand to aid,
Who fashions the clay no love will change,
And fixes a beauty never to fade.

"Let Robbia's craft so apt and strange
Arrest the remains of young and fair,
And rivet them while the seasons range.

"Make me a face on the window there,
Waiting as ever, mute the while,
My love to pass below in the square!

"And let me think that it may beguile
Dreary days which the dead must spend
Down in their darkness under the aisle,

"To say, 'What matters it at the end?
I did no more while my heart was warm
Than does that image, my pale-faced friend.'

"Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
And the blood that blues the inside arm —

"Unless we turn, as the soul knows how,
The earthly gift to an end divine?
A lady of clay is as good, I trow."

But long ere Robbia's cornice, fine,
With flowers and fruits which leaves enlace,
Was set where now is the empty shrine —

(And, leaning out of a bright blue space,
As a ghost might lean from a chink of sky,
The passionate pale lady's face —

Eying ever, with earnest eye
And quick-turned neck at its breathless stretch,
Someone who ever is passing by —)

The Duke had sighed like the simplest wretch
In Florence, "Youth — my dream escapes!
Will its record stay?" And he bade them fetch

Some subtle molder of brazen shapes —
"Can the soul, the will, die out of a man
Ere his body find the grave that gapes?

"John of Douay shall effect my plan,
Set me on horseback here aloft,
Alive, as the crafty sculptor can,

"In the very square I have crossed so oft,
That men may admire, when future suns
Shall touch the eyes to a purpose soft,

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129. **the parapet**, the barrier between them. 159. **the serpent's tooth**, probably ingratitude and dilatoriness on the part of her lover, the Duke.

169. **Robbia's craft.** Della Robbia is the name of a distinguished family of Florentine artists, the last one of whom died in 1566. "Robbia's craft" refers to relief work in marble, bronze, and terra-cotta. 202. **John of Douay**, usually called Giovanni da Bologna (1524-1608), a noted sculptor of Italy.

“While the mouth and the brow stay brave in bronze —
Admire and say, ‘When he was alive
How he would take his pleasure once!’

“And it shall go hard but I contrive
To listen the while, and laugh in my tomb
At idleness which aspires to strive.”

So! While these wait the trump of doom,
How do their spirits pass, I wonder,
Nights and days in the narrow room?

Still, I suppose, they sit and ponder
What a gift life was, ages ago,
Six steps out of the chapel yonder.

Only they see not God, I know,
Nor all that chivalry of his,
The soldier-saints who, row on row,

Burn upward each to his point of bliss —
Since, the end of life being manifest,
He had burned his way through the world to this.

I hear you reproach, “But delay was best,
For their end was a crime.” — Oh, a crime will do
As well, I reply, to serve for a test,

As a virtue golden through and through,
Sufficient to vindicate itself
And prove its worth at a moment’s view!

Must a game be played for the sake of pelf?
Where a button goes, ’twere an epigram
To offer the stamp of the very Guelph.

The true has no value beyond the sham;
As well the counter as coin, I submit,
When your table’s a hat, and your prize, a dram.

Stake your counter as boldly every whit,
Venture as warily, use the same skill,
Do your best, whether winning or losing it,

If you choose to play! — is my principle.
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life’s set prize, be it what it will!

The counter our lovers staked was lost
As surely as if it were lawful coin;
And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost

Is — the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a vice, I say.
You of the virtue (we issue join)
How strive you? *De te, fabula!*

(1855)

## “CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME”

My first thought was, he lied in every word,
That hoary cripple, with malicious eye
Askance to watch the working of his lie
On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford
Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored
Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.

What else should he be set for, with his staff?
What, save to waylay with his lies, ensnare
All travelers who might find him posted there,
And ask the road? I guessed what skull-like laugh
Would break, what crutch ’gin write my epitaph
For pastime in the dusty thoroughfare,

If at his counsel I should turn aside
Into that ominous tract which, all agree,
Hides the Dark Tower. Yet acquiescingly
I did turn as he pointed — neither pride
Nor hope rekindling at the end descried,
So much as gladness that some end might be.

For, what with my whole world-wide wandering,
What with my search drawn out through years, my hope
Dwindled into a ghost not fit to cope
With that obstreperous joy success would bring —
I hardly tried now to rebuke the spring
My heart made, finding failure in its scope.

As when a sick man very near to death
Seems dead indeed, and feels begin and end
The tears, and takes the farewell of each friend,
And hears one bid the other go, draw breath
Freelier outside (“since all is o’er,” he saith,
“And the blow fallen no grieving can amend”),

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234. **To offer . . . Guelph,** to offer real money bearing the impress of the crown. The Guelphs were the ruling faction in Italy from the 12th to the 15th centuries.

250. **De te, fabula,** the fable is told concerning yourself. See Critical Notes.

*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came.* The title *Childe* was given to a young knight who had not yet distinguished himself. See Critical Notes.

14. **all agree.** So the cripple says.

While some discuss if near the other graves
Be room enough for this, and when a day
Suits best for carrying the corpse away,
With care about the banners, scarves and staves;
And still the man hears all, and only craves
He may not shame such tender love and stay.

Thus, I had so long suffered in this quest,
Heard failure prophesied so oft, been writ
So many times among "The Band" — to wit,
The knights who to the Dark Tower's search addressed
Their steps — that just to fail as they, seemed best,
And all the doubt was now — should I be fit?

So, quiet as despair, I turned from him,
That hateful cripple, out of his highway
Into the path he pointed. All the day
Had been a dreary one at best, and dim
Was settling to its close, yet shot one grim
Red leer to see the plain catch its estray.

For mark! no sooner was I fairly found
Pledged to the plain, after a pace or two,
Than, pausing to throw backward a last view
O'er the safe road, 'twas gone; gray plain all round—
Nothing but plain to the horizon's bound.
I might go on; naught else remained to do.

So, on I went. I think I never saw
Such starved ignoble nature; nothing throve;
For flowers — as well expect a cedar grove!
But cockle, spurge, according to their law
Might propagate their kind, with none to awe,
You'd think; a burr had been a treasure trove.

No! penury, inertness, and grimace,
In some strange sort, were the land's portion. "See
Or shut your eyes," said Nature peevishly,
"It nothing skills — I cannot help my case;
'Tis the Last Judgment's fire must cure this place,
Calcine its clods, and set my prisoners free."

If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents
Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to balk
All hope of greenness? 'Tis a brute must walk
Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.

As for the grass, it grew as scant as hair
In leprosy; thin dry blades pricked the mud,
Which underneath looked kneaded up with blood.
One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
Stood stupefied, however he came there—
Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!

Alive? he might be dead for aught I know,
With that red gaunt and colloped neck a-strain,
And shut eyes underneath the rusty mane;
Seldom went such grotesqueness with such woe;
I never saw a brute I hated so;
He must be wicked to deserve such pain.

I shut my eyes and turned them on my heart.
As a man calls for wine before he fights,
I asked one draft of earlier, happier sights,
Ere fitly I could hope to play my part.
Think first, fight afterwards — the soldier's art;
One taste of the old time sets all to rights.

Not it! I fancied Cuthbert's reddening face
Beneath its garniture of curly gold,
Dear fellow, till I almost felt him fold
An arm in mine to fix me to the place,
That way he used. Alas, one night's disgrace!
Out went my heart's new fire and left it cold.

Giles then, the soul of honor — there he stands
Frank as ten years ago when knighted first.
What honest man should dare (he said) he durst.
Good — but the scene shifts — faugh! what hangman hands
Pin to his breast a parchment? His own bands
Read it. Poor traitor, spit upon and curst!

Better this present than a past like that;
Back therefore to my darkening path again!
No sound, no sight as far as eye could strain.
Will the night send a howlet or a bat?
I asked — when something on the dismal flat
Came to arrest my thoughts and change their train.

48. **estray**, the one who has strayed—namely, Childe Roland. 64. **skills**, matters. 66. **Calcine**, reduce to powder by heat. 68. **bents**, coarse grasses.

80. **colloped**, marked with ridges.

A sudden little river crossed my path
As unexpected as a serpent comes.
No sluggish tide congenial to the glooms;
This, as it frothed by, might have been a bath
For the fiend's glowing hoof — to see the wrath
Of its black eddy bespate with flakes and spumes.

So petty yet so spiteful! All along,
Low scrubby alders kneeled down over it;
Drenched willows flung them headlong in a fit
Of mute despair, a suicidal throng;
The river which had done them all the wrong,
Whate'er that was, rolled by, deterred no whit.

Which, while I forded — good saints, how I feared
To set my foot upon a dead man's cheek,
Each step, or feel the spear I thrust to seek
For hollows, tangled in his hair or beard!
— It may have been a water-rat I speared,
But, ugh! it sounded like a baby's shriek.

Glad was I when I reached the other bank.
Now for a better country. Vain presage!
Who were the strugglers, what war did they wage,
Whose savage trample thus could pad the dank
Soil to a plash? Toads in a poisoned tank,
Or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage —

The fight must so have seemed in that fell cirque.
What penned them there, with all the plain to choose?
No footprint leading to that horrid mews,
None out of it. Mad brewage set to work
Their brains, no doubt, like galley-slaves the Turk
Pits for his pastime, Christians against Jews.

And more than that — a furlong on — why, there!
What bad use was that engine for, that wheel,
Or brake, not wheel — that harrow fit to reel
Men's bodies out like silk? with all the air
Of Tophet's tool, on earth left unaware,
Or brought to sharpen its rusty teeth of steel.

Then came a bit of stubbed ground, once a wood,
Next a marsh, it would seem, and now mere earth
Desperate and done with — so a fool finds mirth,
Makes a thing and then mars it, till his mood
Changes and off he goes! — within a rood,
Bog, clay and rubble, sand and stark black dearth.

Now blotches rankling, colored gay and grim,
Now patches where some leanness of the soil's
Broke into moss or substances like boils;
Then came some palsied oak, a cleft in him
Like a distorted mouth that splits its rim
Gaping at death, and dies while it recoils.

And just as far as ever from the end!
Naught in the distance but the evening, naught
To point my footstep further! At the thought,
A great black bird, Apollyon's bosom-friend,
Sailed past, nor beat his wide wing dragon-penned
That brushed my cap — perchance the guide I sought.

For, looking up, aware I somehow grew,
'Spite of the dusk, the plain had given place
All round to mountains — with such name to grace
Mere ugly heights and heaps now stolen in view.
How thus they had surprised me — solve it, you!
How to get from them was no clearer case.

Yet half I seemed to recognize some trick
Of mischief happened to me, God knows when —
In a bad dream perhaps. Here ended, then,
Progress this way. When, in the very nick
Of giving up, one time more, came a click
As when a trap shuts — you're inside the den!

Burningly it came on me all at once,
This was the place! those two hills on the right,
Crouched like two bulls locked horn in horn in fight;

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114. **bespate**, spattered. 130. **pad**, tread down. 131. **plash**, puddle. 135. **mews**, enclosure, pen. 143. **Tophet**, an Old Testament name for hell.

150. **rubble**, broken stone. 160. **Apollyon's**, the devil's; from *Revelation*, 9:11.—"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name . . . is Apollyon." 161. **dragon-penned**, furnished with feathers like those in a dragon's wing. 174. **As when**, etc. Cf. *Love in a Life*, page 232.

While to the left, a tall scalped mountain . . . Dunce,
Dotard, a-dozing at the very nonce,
After a life spent training for the sight!

What in the midst lay but the Tower itself?
The round squat turret, blind as the fool's heart,
Built of brown stone, without a counterpart
In the whole world. The tempest's mocking elf
Points to the shipman thus the unseen shelf
He strikes on, only when the timbers start.

Not see? because of night perhaps? — why, day
Came back again for that! before it left,
The dying sunset kindled through a cleft;
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay —
"Now stab and end the creature — to the heft!"

Not hear? when noise was everywhere! it tolled
Increasing like a bell. Names in my ears,
Of all the lost adventurers my peers —
How such a one was strong, and such was bold,
And such was fortunate, yet each of old
Lost, lost! one moment knelled the woe of years.

There they stood, ranged along the hillsides, met
To view the last of me, a living frame
For one more picture! in a sheet of flame
I saw them and I knew them all. And yet
Dauntless the slug-horn to my lips I set,
And blew. "*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came.*" (*1852;* 1855)

## IN A BALCONY

*Persons* { NORBERT, CONSTANCE, THE QUEEN

CONSTANCE *and* NORBERT

*Norbert.* Now!
*Constance.* Not now!
*Nor.* Give me them again, those hands;
Put them upon my forehead — how it throbs!
Press them before my eyes; the fire comes through!
You cruellest, you dearest in the world,
Let me! The Queen must grant whate'er I ask —
How can I gain you and not ask the Queen?
There she stays waiting for me, here stand you;
Some time or other this was to be asked;
Now is the one time — what I ask, I gain.
Let me ask now, Love!
*Con.* Do, and ruin us!
*Nor.* Let it be now, Love! All my soul breaks forth.
How I do love you! Give my love its way!
A man can have but one life and one death,
One heaven, one hell. Let me fulfill my fate —
Grant me my heaven now! Let me know you mine,
Prove you mine, write my name upon your brow,
Hold you and have you, and then die away,
If God please, with completion in my soul!
*Con.* I am not yours then? How content this man!
I am not his — who change into himself,
Have passed into his heart and beat its beats,
Who give my hands to him, my eyes, my hair,
Give all that was of me away to him —
So well, that now, my spirit turned his own,
Takes part with him against the woman here,
Bids him not stumble at so mere a straw
As caring that the world be cognizant
How he loves her and how she worships him.
You have this woman, not as yet that world.
Go on, I bid, nor stop to care for me
By saving what I cease to care about,
The courtly name and pride of circumstance —
The name you'll pick up and be cumbered with
Just for the poor parade's sake, nothing more;
Just that the world may slip from under you —
Just that the world may cry, "So much for him —
The man predestined to the heap of crowns;
There goes his chance of winning one, at least!"
*Nor.* The world!
*Con.* You love it! Love me quite as well,
And see if I shall pray for this in vain!
Why must you ponder what it knows or thinks?
*Nor.* You pray for — what, in vain?
*Con.* Oh, my heart's heart,
How I do love you, Norbert! That is right.
But listen, or I take my hands away!
You say, "Let it be now"; you would go now

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179. **nonce,** moment. 203. **slug-horn,** trumpet. The word is really *slogan.* It had formerly been misused by Chatterton to mean *trumpet.*
*In a Balcony.* See Critical Notes.

20. **who.** The antecedent of *who* is *I.* 25. **the woman here,** that is, myself. 40. **for this,** for the concealment of our love.

And tell the Queen, perhaps six steps from us,
You love me — so you do, thank God!
*Nor.* Thank God!
*Con.* Yes, Norbert — but you fain would tell your love,
And, what succeeds the telling, ask of her
My hand. Now take this rose and look at it,
Listening to me. You are the minister,
The Queen's first favorite, nor without a cause.
Tonight completes your wonderful year's-work
(This palace-feast is held to celebrate),
Made memorable by her life's success,
The junction of two crowns, on her sole head,
Her house had only dreamed of anciently;
That this mere dream is grown a stable truth,
Tonight's feast makes authentic. Whose the praise?
Whose genius, patience, energy, achieved
What turned the many heads and broke the hearts?
You are the fate, your minute's in the heaven.
Next comes the Queen's turn. "Name your own reward!"
With leave to clench the past, chain the to-come,
Put out an arm and touch and take the sun
And fix it ever full-faced on your earth,
Possess yourself supremely of her life —
You choose the single thing she will not grant;
Nay, very declaration of which choice
Will turn the scale and neutralize your work;
At best she will forgive you, if she can.
You think I'll let you choose — her cousin's hand?
*Nor.* Wait. First, do you retain your old belief
The Queen is generous — nay, is just?
*Con.* There, there!
So men make women love them, while they know
No more of women's hearts than . . . look you here,
You that are just and generous beside.
Make it your own case! For example now,
I'll say — I let you kiss me, hold my hands —
Why? do you know why? I'll instruct you, then —
The kiss, because you have a name at court;
This hand and this, that you may shut in each
A jewel, if you please to pick up such.
That's horrible? Apply it to the Queen —
Suppose I am the Queen to whom you speak.
"I was a nameless man; you needed me;
Why did I proffer you my aid? — There stood
A certain pretty cousin at your side.
Why did I make such common cause with you?
Access to her had not been easy else.
You give my labor here abundant praise?
'Faith, labor, which she overlooked, grew play.
How shall your gratitude discharge itself?
Give me her hand!"
*Nor.* And still I urge the same.
Is the Queen just? just — generous or no!
*Con.* Yes, just. You love a rose (no harm in that),
But was it for the rose's sake or mine
You put it in your bosom? Mine, you said —
Then, mine you still must say or else be false.
You told the Queen you served her for herself;
If so, to serve her was to serve yourself,
She thinks, for all your unbelieving face!
I know her. In the hall, six steps from us,
One sees the twenty pictures; there's a life
Better than life, and yet no life at all.
Conceive her born in such a magic dome,
Pictures all round her! Why, she sees the world,
Can recognize its given things and facts,
The fight of giants or the feast of gods,
Sages in senate, beauties at the bath,
Chases and battles, the whole earth's display,
Landscape and sea-piece, down to flowers and fruit —
And who shall question that she knows them all,
In better semblance than the things outside?
Yet bring into the silent gallery
Some live thing to contrast in breath and blood,
Some lion, with the painted lion there —
You think she'll understand composedly?
— Say, "That's his fellow in the hunting-piece
Yonder, I've turned to praise a hundred times?"
Not so. Her knowledge of our actual earth,
Its hopes and fears, concerns and sympathies,
Must be too far, too mediate, too unreal.
The real exists for us outside, not her;
How should it, with that life in these four walls,
That father and that mother, first to last
No father and no mother — friends, a heap,
Lovers, no lack — a husband in due time,
And every one of them alike a lie!
Things painted by a Rubens out of naught
Into what kindness, friendship, love should be;
All better, all more grandiose than the life,
Only no life; mere cloth and surface-paint,

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49. **succeeds**, follows. 62. **your . . . heaven**, this is your supreme moment—the stars are favorable to you.

92. **overlooked**, supervised. 123. **mediate**, indirect. 130. **Rubens**, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), a noted Flemish painter.

You feel, while you admire. How should she feel?
Yet now that she has stood thus fifty years
The sole spectator in that gallery,
You think to bring this warm real struggling love
In to her of a sudden, and suppose
She'll keep her state untroubled? Here's the truth —
She'll apprehend truth's value at a glance,
Prefer it to the pictured loyalty?
You only have to say, "So men are made,
For this they act; the thing has many names,
But this the right one; and now, Queen, be just!"
Your life slips back; you lose her at the word:
You do not even for amends gain me.
He will not understand! oh, Norbert, Norbert,
Do you not understand?
*Nor.* The Queen's the Queen,
I am myself — no picture, but alive
In every nerve and every muscle, here
At the palace-window o'er the people's street,
As she in the gallery where the pictures glow;
The good of life is precious to us both.
She cannot love; what do I want with rule?
When first I saw your face a year ago
I knew my life's good, my soul heard one voice —
"The woman yonder, there's no use of life
But just to obtain her! heap earth's woes in one
And bear them — make a pile of all earth's joys
And spurn them, as they help or help not this;
Only, obtain her!" How was it to be?
I found you were the cousin of the Queen;
I must then serve the Queen to get to you.
No other way. Suppose there had been one,
And I, by saying prayers to some white star
With promise of my body and my soul,
Might gain you — should I pray the star or no?
Instead, there was the Queen to serve! I served,
Helped, did what other servants failed to do.
Neither she sought nor I declared my end.
Her good is hers, my recompense be mine —
I therefore name you as that recompense.
She dreamed that such a thing could never be?
Let her wake now. She thinks there was more cause
In love of power, high fame, pure loyalty?
Perhaps she fancies men wear out their lives
Chasing such shades. Then, I've a fancy too;
I worked because I want you with my soul;
I therefore ask your hand. Let it be now!
*Con.* Had I not loved you from the very first,
Were I not yours, could we not steal out thus
So wickedly, so wildly, and so well,
You might become impatient. What's conceived
Of us without here, by the folk within?
Where are you now? immersed in cares of state —
Where am I now? intent on festal robes —
We two, embracing under death's spread hand!
What was this thought for, what that scruple of yours
Which broke the council up? — to bring about
One minute's meeting in the corridor!
And then the sudden sleights, strange secrecies,
Complots inscrutable, deep telegraphs,
Long-planned chance-meetings, hazards of a look,
"Does she know? does she not know? saved or lost?"
A year of this compression's ecstasy
All goes for nothing! you would give this up
For the old way, the open way, the world's,
His way who beats, and his who sells his wife!
What tempts you? — their notorious happiness
Makes you ashamed of ours? The best you'll gain
Will be — the Queen grants all that you require,
Concedes the cousin, rids herself of you
And me at once, and gives us ample leave
To live like our five hundred happy friends.
The world will show us with officious hand
Our chamber-entry, and stand sentinel
Where we so oft have stolen across its traps!
Get the world's warrant, ring the falcons' feet,
And make it duty to be bold and swift,
Which long ago was nature. Have it so!
We never hawked by rights till flung from fist?
Oh, the man's thought! no woman's such a fool.
*Nor.* Yes, the man's thought and my thought, which is more —
One made to love you, let the world take note!
Have I done worthy work? Be love's the praise,
Though hampered by restrictions, barred against
By set forms, blinded by forced secrecies!
Set free my love, and see what love can do
Shown in my life — what work will spring from that!
The world is used to have its business done

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205-207. With these lines cf. lines 232-233 and 625-627.

208. **ring the falcons' feet.** Rings in which to fasten the leashes were put on the feet of the falcons preparatory to hunting.

On other grounds, find great effects produced
For power's sake, fame's sake, motives in men's mouth.
So, good; but let my low ground shame their high!
Truth is the strong thing. Let man's life be true!
And love's the truth of mine. Time prove the rest!
I choose to wear you stamped all over me,
Your name upon my forehead and my breast,
You, from the sword's blade to the ribbon's edge,
That men may see, all over, you in me —
That pale loves may die out of their pretense
In face of mine, shames thrown on love fall off.
Permit this, Constance! Love has been so long
Subdued in me, eating me through and through,
That now 'tis all of me and must have way.
Think of my work, that chaos of intrigues,
Those hopes and fears, surprises and delays,
That long endeavor, earnest, patient, slow,
Trembling at last to its assured result;
Then think of this revulsion! I resume
Life after death (it is no less than life,
After such long unlovely laboring days),
And liberate to beauty life's great need
O' the beautiful, which, while it prompted work,
Suppressed itself erewhile. This eve's the time,
This eve intense with yon first trembling star
We seem to pant and reach; scarce aught between
The earth that rises and the heaven that bends;
All nature self-abandoned, every tree
Flung as it will, pursuing its own thoughts
And fixed so, every flower and every weed,
No pride, no shame, no victory, no defeat;
All under God, each measured by itself.
These statues round us stand abrupt, distinct,
The strong in strength, the weak in weakness fixed,
The Muse forever wedded to her lyre,
Nymph to her fawn, and Silence to her rose;
See God's approval on his universe!
Let us do so — aspire to live as these
In harmony with truth, ourselves being true!
Take the first way, and let the second come!
My first is to possess myself of you;
The music sets the march-step — forward, then!
And there's the Queen, I go to claim you of,
The world to witness, wonder, and applaud.
Our flower of life breaks open. No delay!
*Con.* And so shall we be ruined, both of us.
Norbert, I know her to the skin and bone;
You do not know her, were not born to it,
To feel what she can see or cannot see.
Love, she is generous — aye, despite your smile,
Generous as you are; for, in that thin frame,
Pain-twisted, punctured through and through with cares,
There lived a lavish soul until it starved,
Debarred of healthy food. Look to the soul —
Pity that, stoop to that, ere you begin
(The true man's-way) on justice and your rights,
Exactions and acquittance of the past!
Begin so — see what justice she will deal!
We women hate a debt as men a gift.
Suppose her some poor keeper of a school
Whose business is to sit through summer months
And dole out children leave to go and play,
Herself superior to such lightness — she
In the arm-chair's state and pedagogic pomp —
To the life, the laughter, sun and youth outside —
We wonder such a face looks black on us?
I do not bid you wake her tenderness
(That were vain truly — none is left to wake),
But let her think her justice is engaged
To take the shape of tenderness, and mark
If she'll not coldly pay its warmest debt!
Does she love me, I ask you? not a whit;
Yet, thinking that her justice was engaged
To help a kinswoman, she took me up —
Did more on that bare ground than other loves
Would do on greater argument. For me,
I have no equivalent of such cold kind
To pay her with, but love alone to give
If I give anything. I give her love;
I feel I ought to help her, and I will.
So, for her sake, as yours, I tell you twice
That women hate a debt as men a gift.
If I were you, I could obtain this grace —
Could lay the whole I did to love's account,
Nor yet be very false as courtiers go —
Declaring my success was recompense;
It would be so, in fact — what were it else?
And then, once loose her generosity —
Oh, how I see it! then, were I but you
To turn it, let it seem to move itself,
And make it offer what I really take,
Accepting just, in the poor cousin's hand,
Her value as the next thing to the Queen's —
Since none love queens directly, none dare that,
And a thing's shadow or a name's mere echo
Suffices those who miss the name and thing!
You pick up just a ribbon she has worn,
To keep in proof how near her breath you came.

Say, I'm so near I seem a piece of her —
Ask for me that way — oh, you understand —
You'd find the same gift yielded with a grace,
Which, if you make the least show to extort . . .
—You'll see! and when you have ruined both of us,
Dissertate on the Queen's ingratitude!
*Nor.* Then, if I turn it that way, you consent?
'Tis not my way; I have more hope in truth.
Still, if you won't have truth — why, this indeed,
Were scarcely false, as I'd express the sense.
Will you remain here?
*Con.* O best heart of mine,
How I have loved you! then, you take my way?
Are mine as you have been her minister,
Work out my thought, give it effect for me,
Paint plain my poor conceit and make it serve?
I owe that withered woman everything —
Life, fortune, you, remember! Take my part —
Help me to pay her! Stand upon your rights?
You, with my rose, my hands, my heart on you?
Your rights are mine — you have no rights but mine.
*Nor.* Remain here. How you know me!
*Con.* Ah, but still —
[*He breaks from her; she remains. Dance-music from within.*

(*Enter the* QUEEN)

*Queen.* Constance? She is here, as he said. Speak quick!
Is it so? Is it true or false? One word!
*Con.* True.
*Queen.* Mercifullest Mother, thanks to thee!
*Con.* Madam?
*Queen.* I love you, Constance, from my soul.
Now say once more, with any words you will,
'Tis true, all true, as true as that I speak.
*Con.* Why should you doubt it?
*Queen.* Ah, why doubt? why doubt?
Dear, make me see it! Do you see it so?
None see themselves; another sees them best.
You say "why doubt it?" — you see him and me.
It is because the Mother has such grace
That if we had but faith — wherein we fail —
Whate'er we yearn for would be granted us;
Yet still we let our whims prescribe despair,
Our fancies thwart and cramp our will and power,
And while accepting life, abjure its use.
Constance, I had abjured the hope of love
And being loved, as truly as yon palm
The hope of seeing Egypt from that plot.
*Con.* Heaven!
*Queen.* But it was so, Constance, it was so!
Men say — or do men say it? fancies say —
"Stop here, your life is set, you are grown old.
Too late — no love for you, too late for love —
Leave love to girls. Be queen; let Constance love!"
One takes the hint — half meets it like a child,
Ashamed at any feelings that oppose.
"O love, true, never think of love again!
I am a queen; I rule, not love, forsooth."
So it goes on; so a face grows like this,
Hair like this hair, poor arms as lean as these,
Till — nay, it does not end so, I thank God!
*Con.* I cannot understand —
*Queen.* The happier you!
Constance, I know not how it is with men;
For women (I am a woman now like you)
There is no good of life but love — but love!
What else looks good, is some shade flung from love;
Love gilds it, gives it worth. Be warned by me,
Never you cheat yourself one instant! Love,
Give love, ask only love, and leave the rest!
O Constance, how I love you!
*Con.* I love you.
*Queen.* I do believe that all is come through you.
I took you to my heart to keep it warm
When the last chance of love seemed dead in me;
I thought your fresh youth warmed my withered heart.
Oh, I am very old now, am I not?
Not so! it is true and it shall be true!
*Con.* Tell it me; let me judge if true or false.
*Queen.* Ah, but I fear you! You will look at me
And say, "She's old, she's grown unlovely quite
Who ne'er was beauteous; men want beauty still."
Well, so I feared — the curse! so I felt sure!
*Con.* Be calm. And now you feel not sure, you say?
*Queen.* Constance, he came — the coming was not strange —
Do not I stand and see men come and go?
I turned a half-look from my pedestal
Where I grow marble — "one young man the more!

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362. **Too late . . . for love.** Cf. Christina Rossetti's *Too Late for Love,* (from *The Prince's Progress*) page 564.

He will love someone; that is naught to me;
What would he with my marble stateliness?"
Yet this seemed somewhat worse than heretofore;
The man more gracious, youthful, like a god,
And I still older, with less flesh to change —
We two those dear extremes that long to touch.
It seemed still harder when he first began
To labor at those state-affairs, absorbed
The old way for the old end — interest.
Oh, to live with a thousand beating hearts
Around you, swift eyes, serviceable hands,
Professing they've no care but for your cause,
Thought but to help you, love but for yourself —
And you the marble statue all the time
They praise and point at as preferred to life,
Yet leave for the first breathing woman's smile,
First dancer's, gypsy's, or street baladine's!
Why, how I have ground my teeth to hear men's speech
Stifled for fear it should alarm my ear,
Their gait subdued lest step should startle me,
Their eyes declined, such queendom to respect,
Their hands alert, such treasure to preserve,
While not a man of them broke rank and spoke,
Wrote me a vulgar letter all of love,
Or caught my hand and pressed it like a hand!
There have been moments, if the sentinel
Lowering his halbert to salute the queen,
Had flung it brutally and clasped my knees,
I would have stooped and kissed him with my soul.
*Con.* Who could have comprehended?
*Queen.* Aye, who — who?
Why, no one, Constance, but this one who did.
Not they, not you, not I. Even now perhaps
It comes too late — would you but tell the truth.
*Con.* I wait to tell it.
*Queen.* Well, you see, he came,
Outfaced the others, did a work this year
Exceeds in value all was ever done,
You know — it is not I who say it — all
Say it. And so (a second pang and worse)
I grew aware not only of what he did,
But why so wondrously. Oh, never work
Like his was done for work's ignoble sake —
Souls need a finer aim to light and lure!
I felt, I saw, he loved — loved somebody.
And Constance, my dear Constance, do you know,
I did believe this while 'twas you he loved.
*Con.* Me, madam?
*Queen.* It did seem to me, your face
Met him where'er he looked; and whom but you
Was such a man to love? It seemed to me,
You saw he loved you, and approved his love,
And both of you were in intelligence.
You could not loiter in that garden, step
Into this balcony, but I straight was stung
And forced to understand. It seemed so true,
So right, so beautiful, so like you both,
That all this work should have been done by him
Not for the vulgar hope of recompense,
But that at last — suppose, some night like this —
Borne on to claim his due reward of me,
He might say, "Give her hand and pay me so."
And I (O Constance, you shall love me now!)
I thought, surmounting all the bitterness,
"And he shall have it. I will make her blest,
My flower of youth, my woman's self that was,
My happiest woman's self that might have been!
These two shall have their joy and leave me here."
Yes — yes!
*Con.* Thanks!
*Queen.* And the word was on my lips
When he burst in upon me. I looked to hear
A mere calm statement of his just desire
For payment of his labor. When — O heaven,
How can I tell you? Lightning on my eyes
And thunder in my ears proved that first word
Which told 'twas love of me, of me, did all —
He loved me — from the first step to the last,
Loved me!
*Con.* You hardly saw, scarce heard him speak
Of love; what if you should mistake?
*Queen.* No, no —
No mistake! Ha, there shall be no mistake!
He had not dared to hint the love he felt —
You were my reflex — (how I understood!)
He said you were the ribbon I had worn,
He kissed my hand, he looked into my eyes,
And love, love came at end of every phrase.
Love is begun; this much is come to pass;
The rest is easy. Constance, I am yours!
I will learn, I will place my life on you;
Teach me but how to keep what I have won!
Am I so old? This hair was early gray;
But joy ere now has brought hair brown again,
And joy will bring the cheek's red back, I feel.
I could sing once too; that was in my youth.
Still, when men paint me, they declare me . . . yes,
Beautiful — for the last French painter did!

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412. **baladine**, a singer of ballads, a street dancer.

I know they flatter somewhat; you are frank —
I trust you. How I loved you from the first!
Some queens would hardly seek a cousin out
And set her by their side to take the eye;
I must have felt that good would come from you.
I am not generous — like him — like you!
But he is not your lover after all;
It was not you he looked at. Saw you him?
You have not been mistaking words or looks?
He said you were the reflex of myself.
And yet he is not such a paragon
To you, to younger women who may choose
Among a thousand Norberts. Speak the truth!
You know you never named his name to me;
You know, I cannot give him up — ah God,
Not up now, even to you!
*Con.* Then calm yourself.
*Queen.* See, I am old — look here, you happy girl!
I will not play the fool, deceive — ah, whom?
'Tis all gone; put your cheek beside my cheek
And what a contrast does the moon behold!
But then I set my life upon one chance,
The last chance and the best — am *I* not left,
My soul, myself? All women love great men
If young or old; it is in all the tales;
Young beauties love old poets who can love —
Why should not he, the poems in my soul,
The passionate faith, the pride of sacrifice,
Life-long, death-long? I throw them at his feet.
Who cares to see the fountain's very shape,
Whether it be a Triton's or a Nymph's
That pours the foam, makes rainbows all around?
You could not praise indeed the empty conch;
But I'll pour floods of love and hide myself.
How I will love him! Cannot men love love?
Who was a queen and loved a poet once,
Humpbacked, a dwarf? Ah, women can do that!
Well, but men too; at least, they tell you so.
They love so many women in their youth,
And even in age they all love whom they please;
And yet the best of them confide to friends
That 'tis not beauty makes the lasting love —
They spend a day with such and tire the next.
They like soul — well then, they like phantasy,
Novelty even. Let us confess the truth,
Horrible though it be, that prejudice,
Prescription . . . curses! they will love a queen.
They will, they do; and will not, does not — he?
*Con.* How can he? You are wedded; 'tis a name,
We know, but still a bond. Your rank remains,
His rank remains. How can he, nobly souled
As you believe and I incline to think,
Aspire to be your favorite, shame and all?
*Queen.* Hear her! There, there now — could she love like me?
What did I say of smooth-cheeked youth and grace?
See all it does or could do! so youth loves!
Oh, tell him, Constance, you could never do
What I will — you, it was not born in! I
Will drive these difficulties far and fast
As yonder mists curdling before the moon.
I'll use my light too, gloriously retrieve
My youth from its enforced calamity,
Dissolve that hateful marriage, and be his,
His own in the eyes alike of God and man.
*Con.* You will do — dare do . . . pause on what you say!
*Queen.* Hear her! I thank you, sweet, for that surprise.
You have the fair face; for the soul, see mine!
I have the strong soul; let me teach you, here.
I think I have borne enough and long enough,
And patiently enough, the world remarks,
To have my own way now, unblamed by all.
It does so happen (I rejoice for it)
This most unhoped-for issue cuts the knot.
There's not a better way of settling claims
Than this; God sends the accident express.
And were it for my subjects' good, no more,
'Twere best thus ordered. I am thankful now,
Mute, passive, acquiescent. I receive,
And bless God simply, or should almost fear
To walk so smoothly to my ends at last.
Why, how I baffle obstacles, spurn fate!
How strong I am! Could Norbert see me now!
*Con.* Let me consider. It is all too strange.
*Queen.* You, Constance, learn of me; do you, like me!
You are young, beautiful; my own, best girl,
You will have many lovers, and love one —
Light hair, not hair like Norbert's, to suit yours,
Taller than he is, since yourself are tall.
Love him, like me! Give all away to him;
Think never of yourself; throw by your pride,
Hope, fear — your own good as you saw it once,
And love him simply for his very self.
Remember, I (and what am I to you?)

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516. **Triton,** a sea-god, part man, part horse, and part fish. He blew a twisted seashell to calm or raise the waves.

521. **a queen . . . once.** This may refer to Françoise d'Aubigne, Marquise de Maintenon (1635-1719), who first married the deformed Scarron, a French poet and dramatist, and after his death became the consort of King Louis XIV.

Would give up all for one, leave throne, lose life,
Do all but just unlove him! He loves me.
*Con.* He shall.
*Queen.* You, step inside my inmost heart!
Give me your own heart; let us have one heart!
I'll come to you for counsel; "this he says,
This he does; what should this amount to, pray?
Beseech you, change it into current coin!
Is that worth kisses? Shall I please him there?"
And then we'll speak in turn of you — what else?
Your love, according to your beauty's worth,
For you shall have some noble love, all gold;
Whom choose you? We will get him at your choice.
— Constance, I leave you. Just a minute since,
I felt as I must die or be alone,
Breathing my soul into an ear like yours;
Now, I would face the world with my new life,
Wear my new crown. I'll walk around the rooms,
And then come back and tell you how it feels.
How soon a smile of God can change the world!
How we are made for happiness — how work
Grows play, adversity a winning fight!
True, I have lost so many years; what then?
Many remain; God has been very good.
You, stay here! 'Tis as different from dreams,
From the mind's cold calm estimate of bliss,
As these stone statues from the flesh and blood.
The comfort thou hast caused mankind, God's moon!

*She goes out, leaving* Constance. *Dance-music from within.*

(Norbert *enters.*)

*Nor.* Well? we have but one minute and one word!
*Con.* I am yours, Norbert!
*Nor.* Yes, mine.
*Con.* Not till now!
You were mine. Now I give myself to you.
*Nor.* Constance?
*Con.* Your own! I know the thriftier way
Of giving — haply, 'tis the wiser way.
Meaning to give a treasure, I might dole
Coin after coin out (each, as that were all,
With a new largess still at each despair)
And force you keep in sight the deed, preserve
Exhaustless till the end my part and yours,
My giving and your taking; both our joys
Dying together. Is it the wiser way?
I choose the simpler; I give all at once.
Know what you have to trust to, trade upon!
Use it, abuse it — anything but think
Hereafter, "Had I known she loved me so,
And what my means, I might have thriven with it."
This is your means. I give you all myself.
*Nor.* I take you and thank God.
*Con.* Look on through years!
We cannot kiss, a second day like this;
Else were this earth no earth.
*Nor.* With this day's heat
We shall go on through years of cold.
*Con.* So, best!
— I try to see those years — I think I see.
You walk quick, and new warmth comes; you look back
And lay all to the first glow — not sit down
Forever brooding on a day like this
While seeing embers whiten and love die.
Yes, love lives best in its effect; and mine,
Full in its own life, yearns to live in yours.
*Nor.* Just so. I take and know you all at once.
Your soul is disengaged so easily,
Your face is there, I know you; give me time,
Let me be proud and think you shall know me.
My soul is slower; in a life I roll
The minute out whereto you condense yours —
The whole slow circle round you I must move,
To be just you. I look to a long life
To decompose this minute, prove its worth.
'Tis the sparks' long succession one by one
Shall show you, in the end, what fire was crammed
In that mere stone you struck; how could you know,
If it lay ever unproved in your sight,
As now my heart lies? Your own warmth would hide
Its coldness, were it cold.
*Con.* But how prove, how?
*Nor.* Prove in my life, you ask?
*Con.* Quick, Norbert — how?
*Nor.* That's easy told. I count life just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.
Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve
As with the body — he who hurls a lance
Or heaps up stone on stone, shows strength alike;
So must I seize and task all means to prove
And show this soul of mine, you crown as yours,
And justify us both.

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652. *educe*, draw forth.

*Con.* Could you write books,
Paint pictures! One sits down in poverty
And writes or paints, with pity for the rich.
*Nor.* And loves one's painting and one's writing, then,
And not one's mistress! All is best, believe,
And we best as no other than we are.
We live, and they experiment on life —
Those poets, painters, all who stand aloof
To overlook the farther. Let us be
The thing they look at! I might take your face
And write of it and paint it — to what end?
For whom? What pale dictatress in the air
Feeds, smiling sadly, her fine ghost-like form
With earth's real blood and breath, the beauteous life
She makes despised forever? You are mine,
Made for me, not for others in the world,
Nor yet for that which I should call my art,
The cold calm power to see how fair you look.
I come to you; I leave you not, to write
Or paint. You are, I am; let Rubens there
Paint us!
*Con.* So, best!
*Nor.* I understand your soul;
You live, and rightly sympathize with life,
With action, power, success. This way is straight;
And time were short beside, to let me change
The craft my childhood learnt; my craft shall serve.
Men set me here to subjugate, enclose,
Manure their barren lives, and force thence fruit
First for themselves, and afterward for me
In the due tithe; the task of some one soul,
Through ways of work appointed by the world.
I am not bid create — men see no star
Transfiguring my brow to warrant that —
But find and bind and bring to bear their wills.
So I began; tonight sees how I end.
What if it see, too, power's first outbreak here
Amid the warmth, surprise, and sympathy,
And instincts of the heart that teach the head?
What if the people have discerned at length
The dawn of the next nature, novel brain
Whose will they venture in the place of theirs,
Whose work, they trust, shall find them as novel ways
To untried heights which yet he only sees?
I felt it when you kissed me. See this Queen,
This people — in our phrase this mass of men —
See how the mass lies passive to my hand
Now that my hand is plastic, with you by
To make the muscles iron! Oh, an end
Shall crown this issue as this crowns the first!
My will be on the people! then, the strain,
The grappling of the potter with his clay,
The long uncertain struggle — the success
And consummation of the spirit-work,
Some vase shape to the curl of the god's lip,
While rounded fair for human sense to see
The Graces in a dance men recognize
With turbulent applause and laughs of heart!
So triumph ever shall renew itself;
Ever shall end in efforts higher yet,
Ever begin . . .
*Con.* I ever helping?
*Nor.* Thus!

(*As he embraces her, the* Queen *enters.*)

*Con.* Hist, madam! So have I performed my part.
You see your gratitude's true decency,
Norbert? A little slow in seeing it!
Begin, to end the sooner! What's a kiss?
*Nor.* Constance?
*Con.* Why, must I teach it you again?
You want a witness to your dullness, sir?
What was I saying these ten minutes long?
Then I repeat—when some young handsome man
Like you has acted out a part like yours,
Is pleased to fall in love with one beyond,
So very far beyond him, as he says —
So hopelessly in love that but to speak
Would prove him mad — he thinks judiciously,
And makes some insignificant good soul,
Like me, his friend, adviser, confidant,
And very stalking-horse to cover him
In following after what he dares not face —
When his end's gained (sir, do you understand?) —
When she, he dares not face, has loved him first —
May I not say so, madam? — tops his hope,
And overpasses so his wildest dream,
With glad consent of all, and most of her
The confidant who brought the same about —
Why, in the moment when such joy explodes,
I do hold that the merest gentleman
Will not start rudely from the stalking-horse,
Dismiss it with a "There, enough of you!"
Forget it, show his back unmannerly;
But like a liberal heart will rather turn
And say, "A tingling time of hope was ours;
Betwixt the fears and falterings, we two lived
A chanceful time in waiting for the prize;
The confidant, the Constance, served not ill.
And though I shall forget her in good time,
Her use being answered now, as reason bids,
Nay as herself bids from her heart of hearts —
Still, she has rights, the first thanks go to her,

The first good praise goes to the prosperous tool,
And the first — which is the last — rewarding kiss."
*Nor.* Constance, it is a dream — ah, see, you smile!
*Con.* So, now his part being properly performed,
Madam, I turn to you and finish mine
As duly; I do justice in my turn.
Yes, madam, he has loved you — long and well;
He could not hope to tell you so — 'twas I
Who served to prove your soul accessible;
I led his thoughts on, drew them to their place
When they had wandered else into despair,
And kept love constant toward its natural aim.
Enough, my part is played; you stoop half-way
And meet us royally and spare our fears;
'Tis like yourself. He thanks you, so do I.
Take him — with my full heart! my work is praised
By what comes of it. Be you happy, both!
Yourself — the only one on earth who can —
Do all for him, much more than a mere heart
Which though warm is not useful in its warmth
As the silk vesture of a queen! fold that
Around him gently, tenderly. For him —
For him — he knows his own part!
*Nor.* Have you done?
I take the jest at last. Should I speak now?
Was yours the wager, Constance, foolish child,
Or did you but accept it? Well — at least
You lose by it.
*Con.* Nay, madam, 'tis your turn!
Restrain him still from speech a little more,
And make him happier as more confident!
Pity him, madam; he is timid yet!
Mark, Norbert! Do not shrink now! Here I yield
My whole right in you to the Queen, observe!
With her go put in practice the great schemes
You teem with, follow the career else closed —
Be all you cannot be except by her!
Behold her! — Madam, say for pity's sake
Anything — frankly say you love him! Else
He'll not believe it; there's more earnest in
His fear than you conceive — I know the man!
*Nor.* I know the woman somewhat, and confess
I thought she had jested better; she begins
To overcharge her part. I gravely wait
Your pleasure, madam; where is my reward?
*Queen.* Norbert, this wild girl — whom I recognize
Scarce more than you do, in her fancy-fit,
Eccentric speech, and variable mirth,
Not very wise perhaps and somewhat bold,
Yet suitable, the whole night's work being strange —
May still be right; I may do well to speak
And make authentic what appears a dream
To even myself. For, what she says is true;
Yes, Norbert — what you spoke just now of love,
Devotion, stirred no novel sense in me,
But justified a warmth felt long before.
Yes, from the first — I loved you, I shall say.
Strange! but I do grow stronger, now 'tis said.
Your courage helps mine; you did well to speak
Tonight, the night that crowns your twelvemonths' toil;
But still I had not waited to discern
Your heart so long, believe me! From the first
The source of so much zeal was almost plain,
In absence even of your own words just now
Which hazarded the truth. 'Tis very strange,
But takes a happy ending — in your love
Which mine meets; be it so! as you choose me,
So I choose you.
*Nor.* And worthily you choose.
I will not be unworthy your esteem,
No, madam. I do love you; I will meet
Your nature, now I know it. This was well.
I see — you dare and you are justified;
But none had ventured such experiment,
Less versed than you in nobleness of heart,
Less confident of finding such in me.
I joy that thus you test me ere you grant
The dearest, richest, beauteousest, and best
Of women to my arms; 'tis like yourself.
So — back again into my part's set words —
Devotion to the uttermost is yours,
But no, you cannot, madam, even you,
Create in me the love our Constance does.
Or — something truer to the tragic phrase —
Not yon magnolia-bell superb with scent
Invites a certain insect — that's myself —
But the small eye-flower nearer to the ground.
I take this lady.
*Con.* Stay — not hers, the trap —
Stay, Norbert — that mistake were worst of all!
He is too cunning, madam! It was I,
I, Norbert, who . . .
*Nor.* You, was it, Constance? Then,
But for the grace of this divinest hour
Which gives me you, I might not pardon here!
I am the Queen's; she only knows my brain;
She may experiment upon my heart
And I instruct her too by the result.
But you, Sweet, you who know me, who so long

Have told my heartbeats over, held my life
In those white hands of yours — it is not well!
*Con.* Tush! I have said it, did I not say it all?
The life, for her — the heartbeats, for her sake!
*Nor.* Enough! My cheek grows red, I think. Your test?
There's not the meanest woman in the world,
Not she I least could love in all the world,
Whom, did she love me, had love proved itself,
I dare insult as you insult me now.
Constance, I could say, if it must be said,
"Take back the soul you offer, I keep mine!"
But — "Take the soul still quivering on your hand,
The soul so offered, which I cannot use,
And, please you, give it to some playful friend,
For — what's the trifle he requites me with?
I, tempt a woman, to amuse a man,
That two may mock her heart if it succumb?
No; fearing God and standing 'neath his heaven,
I would not dare insult a woman so,
Were she the meanest woman in the world,
And he, I cared to please, ten emperors!
*Con.* Norbert!
*Nor.* I love once as I live but once.
What case is this to think or talk about?
I love you. Would it mend the case at all
If such a step as this killed love in me?
Your part were done; account to God for it!
But mine — could murdered love get up again,
And kneel to whom you please to designate,
And make you mirth? It is too horrible.
You did not know this, Constance? Now you know
That body and soul have each one life, but one;
And here's my love, here, living, at your feet.
*Con.* See the Queen! Norbert — this one more last word —
If thus you have taken jest for earnest — thus
Loved me in earnest . . .
*Nor.* Ah, no jest holds here!
Where is the laughter in which jests break up,
And what this horror that grows palpable?
Madam — why grasp you thus the balcony?
Have I done ill? Have I not spoken truth?
How could I other? Was it not your test,
To try me, what my love for Constance meant?
Madam, your royal soul itself approves,
The first, that I should choose thus! so one takes
A beggar — asks him, what would buy his child?
And then approves the expected laugh of scorn
Returned as something noble from the rags.
Speak, Constance, I'm the beggar! Ha, what's this?
You two glare each at each like panthers now.
Constance, the world fades; only you stand there!
You did not, in tonight's wild whirl of things,
Sell me — your soul of souls, for any price?
No — no — 'tis easy to believe in you!
Was it your love's mad trial to o'ertop
Mine by this vain self-sacrifice? Well, still —
Though I might curse, I love you. I am love
And cannot change; love's self is at your feet!
[*The* QUEEN *goes out.*
*Con.* Feel my heart; let it die against your own!
*Nor.* Against my own. Explain not; let this be!
This is life's height.
*Con.* Yours, yours, yours!
*Nor.* You and I —
Why care by what meanders we are here
I' the center of the labyrinth? Men have died
Trying to find this place, which we have found.
*Con.* Found, found!
*Nor.* Sweet, never fear what she can do!
We are past harm now.
*Con.* On the breast of God.
I thought of men — as if you were a man.
Tempting him with a crown!
*Nor.* This must end here;
It is too perfect.
*Con.* There's the music stopped.
What measured heavy tread? It is one blaze
About me and within me.
*Nor.* Oh, some death
Will run its sudden finger round this spark
And sever us from the rest!
*Con.* And so do well.
Now the doors open —
*Nor.* 'Tis the guard comes.
*Con.* Kiss!
(*1853;* 1855)

## "TRANSCENDENTALISM: A POEM IN TWELVE BOOKS"

Stop playing, poet! May a brother speak?
'Tis you speak, that's your error. Song's our art:
Whereas you please to speak these naked thoughts
Instead of draping them in sights and sounds.

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*"Transcendentalism: A Poem in Twelve Books."* This is addressed to an imaginary poet who is supposed to be writing a poem on transcendentalism, a system of speculative philosophy. Berdoe thinks that Browning intended the poem as an answer to the critics who had accused him of philosophizing instead of writing poetry.

— True thoughts, good thoughts, thoughts fit to treasure up!
But why such long prolusion and display,
Such turning and adjustment of the harp,
And taking it upon your breast, at length,
Only to speak dry words across its strings?
Stark-naked thought is in request enough;
Speak prose and hollo it till Europe hears!
The six-foot Swiss tube, braced about with bark,
Which helps the hunter's voice from Alp to Alp —
Exchange our harp for that — who hinders you?

But here's your fault; grown men want thought, you think;
Thought's what they mean by verse, and seek in verse;
Boys seek for images and melody,
Men must have reason — so, you aim at men.
Quite otherwise! Objects throng our youth, 'tis true;
We see and hear and do not wonder much:
If you could tell us what they mean, indeed!
As German Boehme never cared for plants
Until it happed, a-walking in the fields,
He noticed all at once that plants could speak,
Nay, turned with loosened tongue to talk with him.
That day the daisy had an eye indeed —
Colloquized with the cowslip on such themes!
We find them extant yet in Jacob's prose.
But by the time youth slips a stage or two
While reading prose in that tough book he wrote
(Collating and emendating the same
And settling on the sense most to our mind),
We shut the clasps and find life's summer past.
Then, who helps more, pray, to repair our loss —
Another Boehme with a tougher book
And subtler meanings of what roses say —
Or some stout Mage like him of Halberstadt,
John, who made things Boehme wrote thoughts about?
He with a "look you!" vents a brace of rimes,
And in there breaks the sudden rose herself,
Over us, under, round us every side,
Nay, in and out the tables and the chairs
And musty volumes, Boehme's book and all —
Buries us with a glory, young once more,
Pouring heaven into this shut house of life.

So come, the harp back to your heart again!
You are a poem, though your poem's naught.
The best of all you showed before, believe,
Was your own boy-face o'er the finer chords
Bent, following the cherub at the top
That points to God with his paired half-moon wings.

(1855)

## HOW IT STRIKES A CONTEMPORARY

I only knew one poet in my life;
And this, or something like it, was his way.

You saw go up and down Valladolid,
A man of mark, to know next time you saw.
His very serviceable suit of black
Was courtly once and conscientious still,
And many might have worn it, though none did;
The cloak, that somewhat shone and showed the threads,
Had purpose, and the ruff, significance.
He walked and tapped the pavement with his cane,
Scenting the world, looking it full in face,
An old dog, bald and blindish, at his heels.
They turned up, now, the alley by the church,
That leads nowhither; now, they breathed themselves
On the main promenade just at the wrong time.
You'd come upon his scrutinizing hat,
Making a peaked shade blacker than itself
Against the single window spared some house
Intact yet with its moldered Moorish work —
Or else surprise the ferrel of his stick
Trying the mortar's temper 'tween the chinks
Of some new shop a-building, French and fine.
He stood and watched the cobbler at his trade,
The man who slices lemons into drink,
The coffee-roaster's brazier, and the boys
That volunteer to help him turn its winch.
He glanced o'er books on stalls with half an eye,
And fly-leaf ballads on the vender's string,
And broad-edge bold-print posters by the wall.
He took such cognizance of men and things,
If any beat a horse, you felt he saw;

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12. **The six-foot Swiss tube,** a kind of wooden trumpet used by Alpine hunters. 22. **Boehme,** Jacob Boehme (1575-1624), a German mystical writer who professed to know all mysteries through actual observation of them. He declared that he was able to see into the being of God and into the heart of things. 37. **him of Halberstadt,** John of Halberstadt, a German magician and astrologer who is said to have made flowers bloom in winter by magic. Cf. Chaucer's *Franklin's Tale* for a story of a similar feat.

*How It Strikes a Contemporary.* This poem, spoken by a Spanish gentleman from the city of Valladolid, in northern Spain, suggests that the function of the poet is "scenting the world, looking it full in face" (line 11).

7. **many might . . . none did,** that is, it was out of style. 11-32. **Scenting . . . note.** These lines are said to reflect Browning's own habits. 28. **fly-leaf ballads,** flying ballads, or broadsides—i.e., ballads printed on one side of large sheets of paper.

If any cursed a woman, he took note;
Yet stared at nobody — you stared at him,
And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,
He seemed to know you and expect as much.
So, next time that a neighbor's tongue was loosed,
It marked the shameful and notorious fact,
We had among us, not so much a spy,
As a recording chief-inquisitor,
The town's true master if the town but knew!
We merely kept a governor for form,
While this man walked about and took account
Of all thought, said, and acted, then went home,
And wrote it fully to our Lord the King,
Who has an itch to know things, he knows why,
And reads them in his bedroom of a night.
Oh, you might smile! there wanted not a touch,
A tang of . . . well, it was not wholly ease
As back into your mind the man's look came.
Stricken in years a little — such a brow
His eyes had to live under! — clear as flint
On either side the formidable nose
Curved, cut, and colored like an eagle's claw.
Had he to do with A's surprising fate?
When altogether old B disappeared
And young C got his mistress — was't our friend,
His letter to the King, that did it all?
What paid the bloodless man for so much pains?
Our Lord the King has favorites manifold,
And shifts his ministry some once a month;
Our city gets new governors at whiles —
But never word or sign, that I could hear,
Notified to this man about the streets
The King's approval of those letters conned
The last thing duly at the dead of night.
Did the man love his office? Frowned our Lord,
Exhorting, when none heard — "Beseech me not!
Too far above my people — beneath me!
I set the watch — how should the people know?
Forget them, keep me all the more in mind!"
Was some such understanding 'twixt the two?

I found no truth in one report at least —
That if you tracked him to his home, down lanes
Beyond the Jewry, and as clean to pace,
You found he ate his supper in a room
Blazing with lights, four Titians on the wall,
And twenty naked girls to change his plate!
Poor man, he lived another kind of life
In that new stuccoed third house by the bridge,
Fresh-painted, rather smart than otherwise!
The whole street might o'erlook him as he sat,
Leg crossing leg, one foot on the dog's back,
Playing a decent cribbage with his maid
(Jacynth, you're sure her name was) o'er the cheese
And fruit, three red halves of starved winter-pears,
Or treat of radishes in April. Nine,
Ten, struck the church clock; straight to bed went he.

My father, like the man of sense he was,
Would point him out to me a dozen times;
" 'St — 'St," he'd whisper, "the Corregidor!"
I had been used to think that personage
Was one with lacquered breeches, lustrous belt,
And feathers like a forest in his hat,
Who blew a trumpet and proclaimed the news,
Announced the bull-fights, gave each church its turn,
And memorized the miracle in vogue!
He had a great observance from us boys;
We were in error; that was not the man.

I'd like now, yet had haply been afraid,
To have just looked, when this man came to die,
And seen who lined the clean gay garret-sides
And stood about the neat low truckle-bed,
With the heavenly manner of relieving guard.
Here had been, mark, the general-in-chief,
Through a whole campaign of the world's life and death,
Doing the King's work all the dim day long,
In his old coat and up to knees in mud,
Smoked like a herring, dining on a crust —
And, now the day was won, relieved at once!
No further show or need for that old coat,
You are sure, for one thing! Bless us, all the while
How sprucely we are dressed out, you and I!
A second, and the angels alter that.
Well, I could never write a verse — could you?
Let's to the Prado and make the most of time.

(1855)

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74. **the Jewry**, the Jewish section.

76. **Titians**, paintings by Titian (1477-1575), a noted Italian painter. 90. **the Corregidor**, the title of the chief magistrate of the city. 115. **the Prado**, the name of the fashionable promenade of Madrid, copied by other Spanish cities.

## AN EPISTLE

### CONTAINING THE STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCE OF KARSHISH, THE ARAB PHYSICIAN

Karshish, the picker-up of learning's crumbs,
The not-incurious in God's handiwork—
This man's-flesh He hath admirably made,
Blown like a bubble, kneaded like a paste,
To coop up and keep down on earth a space
That puff of vapor from His mouth, man's soul —
To Abib, all-sagacious in our art,
Breeder in me of what poor skill I boast,
Like me inquisitive how pricks and cracks
Befall the flesh through too much stress and strain,
Whereby the wily vapor fain would slip
Back and rejoin its source before the term —
And aptest in contrivance (under God)
To baffle it by deftly stopping such —
The vagrant Scholar to his Sage at home
Sends greeting (health and knowledge, fame with peace)
Three samples of true snake-stone — rarer still,
One of the other sort, the melon-shaped
(But fitter, pounded fine, for charms than drugs);
And writeth now the twenty-second time.

My journeyings were brought to Jericho;
Thus I resume. Who studious in our art
Shall count a little labor unrepaid?
I have shed sweat enough, left flesh and bone
On many a flinty furlong of this land.
Also, the country-side is all on fire
With rumors of a marching hitherward;
Some say Vespasian cometh, some, his son.
A black lynx snarled and pricked a tufted ear;
Lust of my blood inflamed his yellow balls;
I cried and threw my staff and he was gone.
Twice have the robbers stripped and beaten me,
And once a town declared me for a spy;
But at the end, I reach Jerusalem,
Since this poor covert where I pass the night,
This Bethany, lies scarce the distance thence
A man with plague-sores at the third degree
Runs till he drops down dead. Thou laughest here!
'Sooth, it elates me, thus reposed and safe,
To void the stuffing of my travel-scrip
And share with thee whatever Jewry yields.
A viscid choler is observable
In tertians, I was nearly bold to say;
And falling-sickness hath a happier cure
Than our school wots of; there's a spider here
Weaves no web, watches on the ledge of tombs,
Sprinkled with mottles on an ash-gray back;
Take five and drop them . . . but who knows his mind,
The Syrian runagate I trust this to?
His service payeth me a sublimate
Blown up his nose to help the ailing eye.
Best wait; I reach Jerusalem at morn,
There set in order my experiences,
Gather what most deserves, and give thee all —
Or I might add, Judæa's gum-tragacanth
Scales off in purer flakes, shines clearer-grained,
Cracks 'twixt the pestle and the porphyry —
In fine, exceeds our produce. Scalp-disease
Confounds me, crossing so with leprosy —
Thou hadst admired one sort I gained at Zoar —
But zeal outruns discretion. Here I end.

Yet stay; my Syrian blinketh gratefully,
Protesteth his devotion is my price —
Suppose I write what harms not, though he steal?
I half resolve to tell thee, yet I blush,
What set me off a-writing first of all.
An itch I had, a sting to write, a tang!
For, be it this town's barrenness — or else —
The Man had something in the look of him —
His case has struck me far more than 'tis worth.
So, pardon if — lest presently I lose
In the great press of novelty at hand
The care and pains this somehow stole from me —
I bid thee take the thing while fresh in mind,
Almost in sight — for, wilt thou have the truth?
The very man is gone from me but now,
Whose ailment is the subject of discourse.
Thus then, and let thy better wit help all!

'Tis but a case of mania — subinduced
By epilepsy, at the turning-point

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*An Epistle.* This poem is based upon the account of Christ's raising of Lazarus from the dead told in *John*, 11: 1-44. Cf. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, 31-32, page 65. The epistle is written from Bethany in Judea by a wandering scholar-physician to the sage Abib, his master in the science of medicine. Both Karshish and Abib are imaginary.

17. **snake-stone**, a stone used as a charm to cure snake bites. 21. **Jericho**, an important city of ancient Palestine. Karshish's last letter covered his travels as far as Jericho. 28. **Vespasian** (9-79 A.D.). He led a campaign against the Jews in 67. His son Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70.

43. **tertians**, persons afflicted with intermittent fever. 44. **falling-sickness**, epilepsy. This disease was ascribed by Karshish to Lazarus, who exemplified the "happier cure." 45. **a spider**, probably the Zebra spider. The use of spiders in medicine is an old practice. 48. **his mind**, the mind of the messenger who is to carry the letter. 50. **a sublimate**, some kind of medicine. 55. **gum-tragacanth**, a kind of gum used in medicine. 57. **the porphyry**, a kind of stone used for pulverizing drugs. 60. **Zoar**, a city southeast of the Dead Sea. It is mentioned in *Genesis*, 13:10 and in *Deuteronomy*, 34:3. 69. **The Man**, Lazarus.

Of trance prolonged unduly some three days;
When, by the exhibition of some drug
Or spell, exorcization, stroke of art
Unknown to me and which 'twere well to know,
The evil thing out-breaking all at once
Left the man whole and sound of body indeed —
But, flinging (so to speak) life's gates too wide,
Making a clear house of it too suddenly,
The first conceit that entered might inscribe
Whatever it was minded on the wall
So plainly at that vantage, as it were,
(First come, first served) that nothing subsequent
Attaineth to erase those fancy-scrawls
The just-returned and new-established soul
Hath gotten now so thoroughly by heart
That henceforth she will read or these or none.
And first — the man's own firm conviction rests
That he was dead (in fact they buried him)
— That he was dead and then restored to life
By a Nazarene physician of his tribe:
— 'Sayeth, the same bade "Rise," and he did rise.
"Such cases are diurnal," thou wilt cry.
Not so this figment! — not, that such a fume,
Instead of giving way to time and health,
Should eat itself into the life of life,
As saffron tingeth flesh, blood, bones and all!
For see, how he takes up the after-life.
The man — it is one Lazarus, a Jew,
Sanguine, proportioned, fifty years of age,
The body's habit wholly laudable,
As much, indeed, beyond the common health
As he were made and put aside to show.
Think, could we penetrate by any drug
And bathe the wearied soul and worried flesh,
And bring it clear and fair, by three days' sleep!
Whence has the man the balm that brightens all?
This grown man eyes the world now like a child.
Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
To bear my inquisition. While they spoke,
Now sharply, now with sorrow — told the case —
He listened not except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed: and yet no fool.
And that's a sample how his years must go.
Look, if a beggar, in fixed middle-life,
Should find a treasure — can he use the same
With straitened habits and with tastes starved small,
And take at once to his impoverished brain
The sudden element that changes things,
That sets the undreamed-of rapture at his hand
And puts the cheap old joy in the scorned dust?
Is he not such an one as moves to mirth —
Warily parsimonious, when no need,
Wasteful as drunkenness at undue times?
All prudent counsel as to what befits
The golden mean, is lost on such an one;
The man's fantastic will is the man's law.
So here — we call the treasure knowledge, say,
Increased beyond the fleshly faculty —
Heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth,
Earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven;
The man is witless of the size, the sum,
The value in proportion of all things,
Or whether it be little or be much.
Discourse to him of prodigious armaments
Assembled to besiege his city now,
And of the passing of a mule with gourds —
'Tis one! Then take it on the other side,
Speak of some trifling fact — he will gaze rapt
With stupor at its very littleness
(Far as I see), as if in that indeed
He caught prodigious import, whole results;
And so will turn to us the bystanders
In ever the same stupor (note this point)
That we too see not with his opened eyes.
Wonder and doubt come wrongly into play,
Preposterously, at cross purposes.
Should his child sicken unto death — why, look
For scarce abatement of his cheerfulness,
Or pretermission of the daily craft!
While a word, gesture, glance from that same child
At play or in the school or laid asleep
Will startle him to an agony of fear,
Exasperation, just as like. Demand
The reason why — "'Tis but a word," object —
"A gesture" — he regards thee as our lord
Who lived there in the pyramid alone,
Looked at us (dost thou mind?) when, being young,
We both would unadvisedly recite
Some charm's beginning, from that book of his,
Able to bid the sun throb wide and burst
All into stars, as suns grown old are wont.
Thou and the child have each a veil alike

---

82. **exhibition**, the act of administering a remedy. 83. **exorcization**, the act of expelling an evil spirit by the use of a holy name. 102. **diurnal**, daily. 103. **such a fume**, such a vaporish fancy. 113. **could we**, if only we could.

161. **pretermission**, omission, interruption. 167. **our lord**, some sage under whom they had studied. Cf. line 254, page 260.

Thrown o'er your heads, from under which ye both
Stretch your blind hands and trifle with a match
Over a mine of Greek fire, did ye know!
He holds on firmly to some thread of life
(It is the life to lead perforcedly)
Which runs across some vast distracting orb
Of glory on either side that meager thread,
Which, conscious of, he must not enter yet —
The spiritual life around the earthly life.
The law of that is known to him as this,
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here.
So is the man perplexed with impulses
Sudden to start off crosswise, not straight on,
Proclaiming what is right and wrong across,
And not along, this black thread through the blaze —
"It should be" balked by "here it cannot be."
And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His sage that bade him "Rise" and he did rise.
Something, a word, a tick o' the blood within
Admonishes; then back he sinks at once
To ashes, who was very fire before,
In sedulous recurrence to his trade
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread;
And studiously the humbler for that pride,
Professedly the faultier that he knows
God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
Indeed the especial marking of the man
Is prone submission to the heavenly will —
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.
'Sayeth, he will wait patient to the last
For that same death which must restore his being
To equilibrium, body loosening soul
Divorced even now by premature full growth;
He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
So long as God please, and just how God please.
He even seeketh not to please God more
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.
Hence, I perceive not he affects to preach
The doctrine of his sect whate'er it be,
Make proselytes as madmen thirst to do;
How can he give his neighbor the real ground,
His own conviction? Ardent as he is —
Call his great truth a lie, why, still the old
"Be it as God please" reassureth him.
I probed the sore as thy disciple should.
"How, beast," said I, "this stolid carelessness
Sufficeth thee, when Rome is on her march
To stamp out like a little spark thy town,
Thy tribe, thy crazy tale, and thee at once?"
He merely looked with his large eyes on me.
The man is apathetic, you deduce?
Contrariwise, he loves both old and young,
Able and weak, affects the very brutes
And birds — how say I? flowers of the field —
As a wise workman recognizes tools
In a master's workshop, loving what they make.
Thus is the man as harmless as a lamb;
Only impatient, let him do his best,
At ignorance and carelessness and sin —
An indignation which is promptly curbed:
As when in certain travel I have feigned
To be an ignoramus in our art
According to some preconceived design,
And happed to hear the land's practitioners,
Steeped in conceit sublimed by ignorance,
Prattle fantastically on disease,
Its cause and cure — and I must hold my peace!

Thou wilt object — Why have I not ere this
Sought out the sage himself, the Nazarene
Who wrought this cure, inquiring at the source,
Conferring with the frankness that befits?
Alas! it grieveth me, the learned leech
Perished in a tumult many years ago,
Accused — our learning's fate — of wizardry,
Rebellion, to the setting up a rule
And creed prodigious as described to me.
His death, which happened when the earthquake fell
(Prefiguring, as soon appeared, the loss
To occult learning in our lord the sage
Who lived there in the pyramid alone),
Was wrought by the mad people — that's their wont!
On vain recourse, as I conjecture it,
To his tried virtue, for miraculous help —
How could he stop the earthquake? That's their way!
The other imputations must be lies;
But take one, though I loathe to give it thee,
In mere respect for any good man's fame.
(And after all, our patient Lazarus
Is stark mad; should we count on what he says?
Perhaps not; though in writing to a leech
'Tis well to keep back nothing of a case.)
This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As — God forgive me! who but God himself,
Creator and sustainer of the world,

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177. **Greek fire**, some highly inflammable substance, supposed to contain sulphur, niter, and naptha. Since it was first used in 673 A.D. in the siege of Constantinople by the Saracens, the reference here is an anachronism.

252. **the earthquake.** The record of the earthquake at the time of the Crucifixion is found in *Matthew*, 27:51.—"And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."

That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile!
— 'Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
And yet was . . . what I said nor choose repeat,
And must have so avouched himself, in fact,
In hearing of this very Lazarus,
Who saith — but why all this of what he saith?
Why write of trivial matters, things of price
Calling at every moment for remark?
I noticed on the margin of a pool
Blue-flowering borage, the Aleppo sort,
Aboundeth, very nitrous. It is strange!

Thy pardon for this long and tedious case,
Which, now that I review it, needs must seem
Unduly dwelt on, prolixly set forth!
Nor I myself discern in what is writ
Good cause for the peculiar interest
And awe indeed this man has touched me with.
Perhaps the journey's end, the weariness
Had wrought upon me first. I met him thus:
I crossed a ridge of short sharp broken hills
Like an old lion's cheek teeth. Out there came
A moon made like a face with certain spots
Multiform, manifold, and menacing;
Then a wind rose behind me. So we met
In this old sleepy town at unaware,
The man and I. I send thee what is writ.
Regard it as a chance, a matter risked
To this ambiguous Syrian — he may lose,
Or steal, or give it thee with equal good.
Jerusalem's repose shall make amends
For time this letter wastes, thy time and mine;
Till when, once more thy pardon and farewell!

The very God! think, Abib; dost thou think?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too —
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!"
The madman saith He said so; it is strange.

(1855)

## FRA LIPPO LIPPI

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
action
The Carmine's my cloister; hunt it up,
Do — harry out, if you must show your zeal,
Whatever rat, there, haps, on his wrong hole,
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,
*Weke, weke*, that's crept to keep him company!
Aha, you know your betters! Then, you'll take
Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off — he's a certain . . . how d' ye call?
Master — a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,
I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!
Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves
Pick up a manner nor discredit you;
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets
And count fair prize what comes into their net?
He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.
Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbors me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
And all's come square again. I'd like his face —
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern — for the slave that holds
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say)

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281. **borage**, a plant supposed to have properties of exhilaration. Aleppo is a town in Syria. 304-312. **The . . . strange.** Compare the closing lines of *Saul*, page 219; of *Caponsacchi*, pages 322-323; and of *Cleon*, page 273.

*Fra Lippo Lippi.* Fra Lippo Lippi (1406-69) was a famous Florentine painter of the 15th century. The account upon which Browning based his interpretation of Lippo's life and art was found in Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*. The poem is addressed to Florentine guards who have caught Lippo in a nocturnal frolic. See Critical Notes.

3. **Zooks**, an oath shortened from *Gadzooks*. 7. **The Carmine's.** Lippo entered the monastery of the Carmelite friars of the Carmine in Florence in 1420. 17. **Cosimo of the Medici.** Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464) was a rich Florentine banker, statesman, and patron of art and literature. The Medici palace, now known as the Palazzo Riccardi, is on the corner of Via Cavour and Via Gori. See *The Statue and the Bust*, page 239. 23. **pilchards**, a kind of cheap common fish. 33-34. **the slave . . . hair**, an imaginary picture. In Lippo's real picture of the beheading of John the Baptist, the head is carried on a great platter by Salome, the daughter of Herodias. The account is found in *Matthew*, 14:1-11.

And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
You know them and they take you? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye —
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands
To roam the town and sing out carnival,
And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,
A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night —
Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.
There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song —
*Flower o' the broom,*
*Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!*
*Flower o' the quince,*
*I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?*
*Flower o' the thyme* — and so on. Round they went.
Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight — three slim shapes,
And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh and blood,
That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it went,
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture — a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped,
And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well met —
*Flower o' the rose,*
*If I've been merry, what matter who knows?*
And so as I was stealing back again
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up tomorrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head —
Mine's shaved — a monk, you say — the sting's in that!
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now!
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two
On fig-skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,
My stomach being empty as your hat,
The wind doubled me up and down I went.
Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand
(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew),
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there,
While I stood munching my first bread that month:
"So, boy, you're minded," quoth the good fat father,
Wiping his own mouth — 'twas refection-time —
"To quit this very miserable world?
Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?" thought I;
By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;
I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
Have given their hearts to — all at eight years old.
Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
'Twas not for nothing — the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
And day-long blessed idleness beside!
"Let's see what the urchin's fit for" — that came next.
Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
Such a to-do! They tried me with their books;
Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
*Flower o' the clove,*
*All the Latin I construe is "amo," I love!*
But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,
And who will curse or kick him for his pains —

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46. **carnival,** a period of gayety preceding Lent. 47. **mew,** coop, pen. (Lippo had been engaged to paint pictures in the palace and had been locked in a room until the work should be done.) 52. **song.** The song that follows is a stornello, a kind of short folk song of the Italians usually improvised on the name of a flower or some other familiar object. 67. **Saint Laurence,** the Church of San Lorenzo. 73. **Jerome . . . breast.** Saint Jerome (340?-420) was the most learned of the early Fathers of the Latin Church. He lived in the desert for several years as a penance for his youthful sins. Early Christian art depicted him on his knees before a crucifix, beating his breast with a stone.

88. **Aunt Lapaccia.** Mona Lapaccia, his father's sister. **trussed,** held firmly.

Which gentleman processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament,
Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped —
How say I? — nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
His bone from the heap of offal in the street —
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike;
He learns the look of things, and none the less
For admonition from the hunger-pinch.
I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
Scrawled them within the antiphonary's marge,
Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,
And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.
"Nay," quoth the Prior, "turn him out, d' ye say?
In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
And put the front on it that ought to be!"
And hereupon he bade me daub away.
Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a blank,
Never was such prompt disemburdening.
First, every sort of monk, the black and white,
I drew them, fat and lean; then, folk at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends —
To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years),
Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head
(Which the intense eyes looked through), came at eve
On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and so was gone.
I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask and have;
Choose, for more's ready!" — laid the ladder flat,
And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.
The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,
Being simple bodies — "That's the very man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
That woman's like the Prior's niece who comes
To care about his asthma; it's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funked;
Their betters took their turn to see and say;
The Prior and the learned pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. "How? what's here?
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! It's devil's-game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men —
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . . no, it's not . . .
It's vapor done up like a new-born babe
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth) —
It's . . . well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here's Giotto, with his Saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising — why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head
With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
Rub all out, try at it a second time.
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,
She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say —
Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off!

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117. **gentleman processional,** etc., gentlemen wearing fine ecclesiastical robes and walking in the religious procession. 121. **the Eight,** the magistrates who governed Florence. 130. **the antiphonary's marge,** the margins of the books used by the choir. 131. **the long music-notes.** The medieval music notes were square or oblong, with long stems. 139-140. **Carmelites, Camaldolese, Preaching Friars.** The Carmelites were monks of the Order of Mount Carmel in Syria; the Camaldolese belonged to the convent of Camaldoli, near Florence; the Preaching Friars are the Dominicans, named after St. Dominic. They were called Brothers Preachers by Pope Innocent III in 1215. These orders owned various monasteries and churches and wanted to possess the greatest religious paintings. 148. **Their cribs,** etc., small thefts of wine, wax, etc. 150. **safe,** because he is in a sacred place, which by the law of the medieval church protected him from arrest. 154-155. **Shaking . . . Christ.** Revenge and religion are at war in him.

157. **passion,** suffering. 189. **Giotto,** Giotti di Bondone (1276-1337), a famous Florentine painter, architect, and sculptor. See note on line 15, page 224. He expressed the soul in his paintings and cared nothing for realistic art. Lippo and Guidi (line 276) introduced realism, which Lippo here defends. 196. **Herodias.** See note on lines 33-34, p. 261.

Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body
So ill the eye can't stop there, must go further
And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white
When what you put for yellow's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks naught.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,
The Prior's niece . . . patron-saint — is it so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
And then add soul and heighten them threefold?
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all
(I never saw it — put the case the same);
If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents—
That's somewhat; and you'll find the soul you have missed,
Within yourself, when you return him thanks.
"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I'm grown a man no doubt, I've broken bounds;
You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
I'm my own master, paint now as I please —
Having a friend, you see, in the Corner-house!
Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front —
Those great rings serve more purposes than just
To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still — "It's art's decline, my son!
You're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer —
Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"
*Flower o' the pine,*
*You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I'll stick to mine!*
I'm not the third, then; bless us, they must know!
Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,
They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them — sometimes do and sometimes don't;
For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints —
A laugh, a cry, the business of the world
(*Flower o' the peach,*
*Death for us all, and his own life for each!*) —
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,
The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,
And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,
In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass
After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.
What would men have? Do they like grass or no —
May they or mayn't they? All I want's the thing
Settled forever one way. As it is,
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself;
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.
For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
I always see the garden and God there
A-making man's wife; and, my lesson learned—
The value and significance of flesh —
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.

You understand me; I'm a beast, I know.
But see, now — why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We've a youngster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop.
His name is Guidi — he'll not mind the monks —
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk;
He picks my practice up — he'll paint apace,
I hope so — though I never live so long,
I know what's sure to follow. You be judge!
You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you're my man, you've seen the world —
The beauty and the wonder and the power,

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228. **the rings in front,** big iron rings on the front of the palace. Lippi used them in climbing in and out of his window. 235. **Brother Angelico,** Fra Angelico, Giovanni da Fiesole (1387-1455), the greatest of the medieval school of religious artists who "painted souls." 236. **Brother Lorenzo,** Lorenzo Monaco, a painter of the Order of the Camaldolese, who also "painted souls."

276. **Guidi,** Tommaso Guidi, or Masaccio (1401-28), nicknamed Hulking Tom. He is said to have been the first Italian artist to paint a nude figure. He was Lippo's master, not his disciple.

The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises — and God made it all!
— For what? Do you feel thankful, aye or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are the frame to? What's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? Oh, this last of course! — you say.
But why not do as well as say, — paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works — paint any one, and count it crime
To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already; nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her — which you can't —
There's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark? we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted — better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How much more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the Prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good —
To find its meaning is my meat and drink.
"Aye, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the Prior; "when your meaning's plain
It does not say to folk — remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday!" Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style;
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"
I ask a brother. "Hugely," he returns —
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the Deacon off his toasted side,
But's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,
The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage;
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd —
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

— That is — you'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night, which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now!
It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself;
And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
. . . There's for you! Give me six months, then go, see
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!
They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root
When ladies crowd to Church at midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or two —
Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,
Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,
And Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotion, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I! —

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307. **cullion,** a low fellow. 323. **a Saint Laurence,** a picture of St. Laurence, who was martyred in 258 by being burned to death on a gridiron.

324. **At Prato.** Some of Lippo's most important work is in the Cathedral at Prato, a town near Florence. 339. **Chianti wine,** wine from Chianti, a region south of Florence. 346. **Sant' Ambrogio's,** Saint Ambrose's Church in Florence. Saint Ambrose was a famous church leader during the fourth century. He became Bishop of Milan in 374. 347-389. **I shall paint,** etc. The picture described is *The Coronation of the Virgin,* now in the Academy of Fine Arts, Florence. The model for the Virgin was Lucrezia Buti, Lippo's mistress. 354. **Saint John,** St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence. 361-363. **Out of a corner . . . I.** Lippo's head appears in the lower right-hand corner of the picture.

Mazed, motionless, and moonstruck — I'm the man!
Back I shrink — what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's-things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
Forward, puts out a soft palm: "Not so fast!"
— Addresses the celestial presence, "Nay,
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there draw —
His camel-hair make up a painting-brush?
We come to brother Lippo for all that,
*Iste perfecit opus!*" So, all smile —
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go
The palm of her, the little lily thing
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,
Like the Prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.
And so all's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!
Your hand, sir, and good-by; no lights, no lights!
The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don't fear me! There's the gray beginning. Zooks! (1855)

## ANDREA DEL SARTO

### CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once.
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him — but tomorrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if — forgive now — should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up tomorrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require —
It saves a model. So! keep looking so —
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
— How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet —
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks — no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything —
All in a twilight, you and I alike —
You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone, you know), but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter; let it lie!

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374-375. **Saint John . . . camel-hair.** Cf. *Mark*, 1:6.— "And John was clothed with camel's hair." 377. **Iste perfecit opus**, this one did the work. The inscription is on a scroll in the picture. 381. **hot cockles**, an old English game in which a blindfolded player tries to guess who strikes him.

*Andrea del Sarto.* Andrea d'Angelo di Francesca (1486-1531) was called "del Sarto" because he was the son of a tailor (sarto). The perfection of his frescoes in the Church of the Annuziata in Florence won him the title of "The Faultless Painter." In 1512 he married Lucrezia del Fede, whose influence led Andrea to neglect his art work. The poem is based upon the account of Andrea found in Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*. See Critical Notes.

15. **Fiesole**, a suburb of Florence. 23-25. **you must serve . . . a model.** Lucrezia is discernible in almost all of the women of Andrea's pictures.

This chamber, for example — turn your head —
All that's behind us! You don't understand,
Nor care to understand, about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak;
And that cartoon, the second from the door —
It is the thing, Love! so such thing should be —
Behold Madonna! — I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep —
Do easily, too — when I say perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps; yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate, 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies — that's long past;
I do what many dream of all their lives —
Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive — you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat —
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter) — so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia; I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed, beating, stuffed, and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word —
Praise them, it boils; or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh,
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth,
The Urbinate, who died five years ago.
('Tis copied; George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art — for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put — and there again —
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right — that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it;
But all the play, the insight, and the stretch —
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think —
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you — oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged,
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting; up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems;
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive;
Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too, the power —
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,

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65. **the Legate's talk.** The Legate was the representative of the Pope. 93. **Morello's outline.** Morello is a high peak of the Apennines, north of Florence.

97-98. **Ah . . . heaven for.** Cf. *A Death in the Desert*, 424-31, page 287; *Cleon*, 114, page 270; *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, 40-41, page 280; and *Saul*, 295, page 219. 105. **The Urbinate,** Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520), one of the greatest of Italian painters. He was born in the city of Urbino. 106. **George Vasari,** 1512-74, a pupil of Andrea del Sarto's, and author of *The Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. 130. **Agnolo,** Michelangelo (1475-1564), famous as a painter, sculptor, architect, and poet.

God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look —
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile;
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck;
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear —
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his Court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts;
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know —
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was — to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife" —
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it),
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?),
If really there was such a chance, so lost —
Is, whether you're — not grateful — but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night,
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love — come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me; oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you — you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?

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149. **That Francis**, Francis I, king of France (1494-1547). He had invited Andrea to come to Fontainebleau, the seat of the richest of the royal palaces. While engaged upon important work there, Andrea was suddenly called home by Lucrezia. He was given money with which to secure works of art for the French king, but he purchased a house with it for Lucrezia. 178. **The Roman's**, Raphael's.

186-188. **When . . . it**, probably a reference to Raphael's decorations made in certain rooms of the Vatican under Julius II (1443-1513). 210. **cue-owls**, small European owls. 220. **Cousin**, a euphemism for *lover*. *Cf.* lines 29-32.

Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more — the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them — that is, Michel Agnolo —
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? Tomorrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand — there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside —
What's better and what's all I care about —
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age tonight.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis! — it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died;
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures — let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems tonight.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance —
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover — the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So — still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia — as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.
(1855)

## CLEON

"As certain also of your own poets have said" —

Cleon the poet (from the sprinkled isles,
Lily on lily, that o'erlace the sea,
And laugh their pride when the light wave lisps "Greece") —
To Protus in his Tyranny: much health!

They give thy letter to me, even now;
I read and seem as if I heard thee speak.
The master of thy galley still unlades
Gift after gift; they block my court at last
And pile themselves along its portico
Royal with sunset, like a thought of thee;
And one white she-slave from the group dispersed
Of black and white slaves (like the checker-work
Pavement, at once my nation's work and gift,
Now covered with this settle-down of doves),
One lyric woman, in her crocus vest
Woven of sea-wools, with her two white hands
Commends to me the strainer and the cup
Thy lip hath bettered ere it blesses mine.

Well-counseled, king, in thy munificence!
For so shall men remark, in such an act
Of love for him whose song gives life its joy,
Thy recognition of the use of life;
Nor call thy spirit barely adequate
To help on life in straight ways, broad enough
For vulgar souls, by ruling and the rest.
Thou, in the daily building of thy tower —
Whether in fierce and sudden spasms of toil,
Or through dim lulls of unapparent growth,
Or when the general work 'mid good acclaim
Climbed with the eye to cheer the architect —
Didst ne'er engage in work for mere work's sake —
Hadst ever in thy heart the luring hope
Of some eventual rest a-top of it,
Whence, all the tumult of the building hushed,
Thou first of men mightst look out to the East;

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241. **scudi**, plural of *scudo*, an Italian coin worth about one dollar. 261. **the New Jerusalem.** For a description of the New Jerusalem and its walls, see *Revelation*, 21:10-21. 263. **Leonard**, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), one of the greatest of Italian painters.

*Cleon.* In this poem Cleon is imagined as a Greek poet replying to a letter written by Protus, an imaginary king, who has been his friend and patron. The quotation is from *Acts*, 17:28. The thought expressed in the poem is characteristic of that of the Greek philosophers of the first century.

1. **the sprinkled isles**, probably the Sporades, lying east of Greece. 4. **Tyranny**, used in the ancient Greek sense, referring to any ruler who had absolute power.

The vulgar saw thy tower, thou sawest the sun.
For this, I promise on thy festival
To pour libation, looking o'er the sea,
Making this slave narrate thy fortunes, speak
Thy great words, and describe thy royal face —
Wishing thee wholly where Zeus lives the most,
Within the eventual element of calm.

Thy letter's first requirement meets me here.
It is as thou hast heard: in one short life
I, Cleon, have effected all those things
Thou wonderingly dost enumerate.
That epos on thy hundred plates of gold
Is mine — and also mine the little chant,
So sure to rise from every fishing-bark
When, lights at prow, the seamen haul their net.
The image of the sun-god on the phare,
Men turn from the sun's self to see, is mine;
The Pœcile, o'er-storied its whole length,
As thou didst hear, with painting, is mine too.
I know the true proportions of a man
And woman also, not observed before;
And I have written three books on the soul,
Proving absurd all written hitherto,
And putting us to ignorance again.
For music — why, I have combined the moods,
Inventing one. In brief, all arts are mine;
Thus much the people know and recognize,
Throughout our seventeen islands. Marvel not.
We of these latter days, with greater mind
Than our forerunners, since more composite,
Look not so great, beside their simple way,
To a judge who only sees one way at once,
One mind-point and no other at a time —
Compares the small part of a man of us
With some whole man of the heroic age,
Great in his way — not ours, nor meant for ours.
And ours is greater, had we skill to know;
For, what we call this life of men on earth,
This sequence of the soul's achievements here
Being, as I find much reason to conceive,
Intended to be viewed eventually
As a great whole, not analyzed to parts,
But each part having reference to all —
How shall a certain part, pronounced complete,
Endure effacement by another part?
Was the thing done? — then, what's to do again?
See, in the checkered pavement opposite,
Suppose the artist made a perfect rhomb,
And next a lozenge, then a trapezoid —
He did not overlay them, superimpose
The new upon the old and blot it out,
But laid them on a level in his work,
Making at last a picture; there it lies.
So, first the perfect separate forms were made,
The portions of mankind; and after, so,
Occurred the combination of the same.
For where had been a progress, otherwise?
Mankind, made up of all the single men —
In such a synthesis the labor ends.
Now mark me! those divine men of old time
Have reached, thou sayest well, each at one point
The outside verge that rounds our faculty;
And where they reached, who can do more than reach?
It takes but little water just to touch
At some one point the inside of a sphere,
And, as we turn the sphere, touch all the rest
In due succession; but the finer air,
Which not so palpably nor obviously
(Though no less universally) can touch
The whole circumference of that emptied sphere,
Fills it more fully than the water did;
Holds thrice the weight of water in itself
Resolved into a subtler element.
And yet the vulgar call the sphere first full
Up to the visible height — and after, void;
Not knowing air's more hidden properties.
And thus our soul, misknown, cries out to Zeus
To vindicate his purpose in our life:
Why stay we on the earth unless to grow?
Long since, I imaged, wrote the fiction out,
That he or other god descended here
And, once for all, showed simultaneously
What, in its nature, never can be shown,
Piecemeal or in succession — showed, I say,
The worth both absolute and relative
Of all his children from the birth of time,
His instruments for all appointed work.
I now go on to image — might we hear
The judgment which should give the due to each,
Show where the labor lay and where the ease,
And prove Zeus' self, the latent everywhere!
This is a dream — but no dream, let us hope,
That years and days, the summers and the springs,
Follow each other with unwaning powers.
The grapes which dye thy wine are richer far,

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41. **Zeus**, the chief of the Grecian gods. 47. **That epos . . . gold**, epic poem, engraved on golden plates. 51. **sun-god . . . phare**, the statue of Apollo on the lighthouse. The word *phare* is derived from the island of Pharos, the site of a great lighthouse. 53. **The Pœcile**, the Portico at Athens, covered with painted scenes of war. 60. **moods.** In Greek music the moods were the scales.

114. **Why stay . . . to grow?** Cf. *Andrea del Sarto*, 97-98, page 267, and *A Death in the Desert*, 424-431, page 287.

Through culture, than the wild wealth of the rock;
The suave plum than the savage-tasted drupe;
The pastured honey-bee drops choicer sweet;
The flowers turn double, and the leaves turn flowers;
That young and tender crescent-moon, thy slave,
Sleeping above her robe as buoyed by clouds,
Refines upon the women of my youth.
What, and the soul alone deteriorates?
I have not chanted verse like Homer, no —
Nor swept string like Terpander, no — nor carved
And painted men like Phidias and his friend;
I am not great as they are, point by point.
But I have entered into sympathy
With these four, running these into one soul,
Who, separate, ignored each other's art.
Say, is it nothing that I know them all?
The wild flower was the larger; I have dashed
Rose-blood upon its petals, pricked its cup's
Honey with wine, and driven its seed to fruit,
And show a better flower if not so large:
I stand myself. Refer this to the gods
Whose gift alone it is! which, shall I dare
(All pride apart) upon the absurd pretext
That such a gift by chance lay in my hand,
Discourse of lightly or depreciate?
It might have fallen to another's hand; what then?
I pass too surely; let at least truth stay!

And next, of what thou followest on to ask.
This being with me as I declare, O king,
My works, in all these varicolored kinds,
So done by me, accepted so by men —
Thou askest, if (my soul thus in men's hearts)
I must not be accounted to attain
The very crown and proper end of life?
Inquiring thence how, now life closeth up,
I face death with success in my right hand:
Whether I fear death less than dost thyself
The fortunate of men? "For" (writest thou)
"Thou leavest much behind, while I leave naught.
Thy life stays in the poems men shall sing,
The pictures men shall study; while my life,
Complete and whole now in its power and joy,
Dies altogether with my brain and arm,
Is lost indeed; since, what survives myself?
The brazen statue to o'erlook my grave,
Set on the promontory which I named.
And that — some supple courtier of my heir
Shall use its robed and sceptered arm, perhaps,
To fix the rope to, which best drags it down.
I go then; triumph thou, who dost not go!"

Nay, thou art worthy of hearing my whole mind.
Is this apparent, when thou turn'st to muse
Upon the scheme of earth and man in chief,
That admiration grows as knowledge grows?
That imperfection means perfection hid,
Reserved in part, to grace the after-time?
If, in the morning of philosophy,
Ere aught had been recorded, nay perceived,
Thou, with the light now in thee, couldst have looked
On all earth's tenantry, from worm to bird,
Ere man, her last, appeared upon the stage —
Thou wouldst have seen them perfect, and deduced
The perfectness of others yet unseen.
Conceding which — had Zeus then questioned thee,
"Shall I go on a step, improve on this,
Do more for visible creatures than is done?"
Thou wouldst have answered, "Aye, by making each
Grow conscious in himself — by that alone.
All's perfect else; the shell sucks fast the rock,
The fish strikes through the sea, the snake both swims
And slides, forth range the beasts, the birds take flight,
Till life's mechanics can no further go —
And all this joy in natural life is put
Like fire from off thy finger into each,
So exquisitely perfect is the same.
But 'tis pure fire, and they mere matter are;
It has them, not they it; and so I choose
For man, thy last premeditated work
(If I might add a glory to the scheme),
That a third thing should stand apart from both,
A quality arise within his soul,
Which, intro-active, made to supervise
And feel the force it has, may view itself,
And so be happy." Man might live at first
The animal life; but is there nothing more?
In due time, let him critically learn
How he lives; and, the more he gets to know
Of his own life's adaptabilities,
The more joy-giving will his life become.
Thus man, who hath this quality, is best.

But thou, king, hadst more reasonably said:
"Let progress end at once — man make no step

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132. **drupe,** any fruit containing a stone, like a plum or a peach. Cleon contrasts the cultivated plum and the wild plum. 140. **Terpander,** a famous Greek musician of the seventh century B.C. He was known as "the father of Greek music." 141. **Phidias,** a great Athenian sculptor of the fifth century B.C. His friend was Pericles, the ruler of Athens (444-429 B.C).

181-186. **Nay . . . after-time.** Compare *Abt Vogler,* 65-96, page 279. 214-220. **Man . . . best.** Compare *A Grammarian's Funeral,* 56-72, page 238.

Beyond the natural man, the better beast,
Using his senses, not the sense of sense."
In man there's failure, only since he left
The lower and inconscious forms of life.
We called it an advance, the rendering plain
Man's spirit might grow conscious of man's life,
And, by new lore so added to the old,
Take each step higher over the brute's head.
This grew the only life, the pleasure-house,
Watch-tower, and treasure-fortress of the soul,
Which whole surrounding flats of natural life
Seemed only fit to yield subsistence to;
A tower that crowns a country. But alas,
The soul now climbs it just to perish there!
For thence we have discovered ('tis no dream —
We know this, which we had not else perceived)
That there's a world of capability
For joy, spread round about us, meant for us,
Inviting us; and still the soul craves all,
And still the flesh replies, "Take no jot more
Than ere thou clombst the tower to look abroad!
Nay, so much less as that fatigue has brought
Deduction to it." We struggle, fain to enlarge
Our bounded physical recipiency,
Increase our power, supply fresh oil to life,
Repair the waste of age and sickness; no,
It skills not! — life's inadequate to joy,
As the soul sees joy, tempting life to take.
They praise a fountain in my garden here
Wherein a Naiad sends the water-bow
Thin from her tube; she smiles to see it rise.
What if I told her, it is just a thread
From that great river which the hills shut up,
And mock her with my leave to take the same?
The artificer has given her one small tube
Past power to widen or exchange — what boots
To know she might spout oceans if she could?
She cannot lift beyond her first thin thread;
And so a man can use but a man's joy
While he sees God's. Is it for Zeus to boast,
"See, man, how happy I live, and despair —
That I may be still happier — for thy use!"
If this were so, we could not thank our lord,
As hearts beat on to doing; 'tis not so —
Malice it is not. Is it carelessness?
Still, no. If care — where is the sign? I ask,
And get no answer, and agree in sum,
O king, with thy profound discouragement,
Who seest the wider but to sigh the more.
Most progress is most failure; thou sayest well.

The last point now: — thou dost except a case —
Holding joy not impossible to one
With artist-gifts — to such a man as I
Who leave behind me living works indeed;
For, such a poem, such a painting lives.
What? dost thou verily trip upon a word,
Confound the accurate view of what joy is
(Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes than thine)
With feeling joy? confound the knowing how
And showing how to live (my faculty)
With actually living? — Otherwise
Where is the artist's vantage o'er the king?
Because in my great epos I display
How divers men young, strong, fair, wise, can act —
Is this as though I acted? If I paint,
Carve the young Phœbus, am I therefore young?
Methinks I'm older that I bowed myself
The many years of pain that taught me art!
Indeed, to know is something, and to prove
How all this beauty might be enjoyed, is more;
But, knowing naught, to enjoy is something too.
Yon rower, with the molded muscles there,
Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.
I can write love-odes; thy fair slave's an ode.
I get to sing of love, when grown too gray
For being beloved; she turns to that young man,
The muscles all a-ripple on his back.
I know the joy of kingship; well, thou art king!

"But," sayest thou — and I marvel, I repeat,
To find thee trip on such a mere word — "what
Thou writest, paintest, stays; that does not die:
Sappho survives, because we sing her songs,
And Æschylus, because we read his plays!"
Why, if they live still, let them come and take
Thy slave in my despite, drink from thy cup,
Speak in my place. Thou diest while I survive?
Say rather that my fate is deadlier still,

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252. **Naiad**, the figure of a nymph.

288. **Phœbus**, Apollo. See line 51. 296. **I . . . ode.** Cf. *Transcendentalism*, page 255. 304. **Sappho**, a famous Greek poetess of 600 B.C. 305. **Æschylus**, the greatest writer of Greek tragedy (525-456 B.C.)

In this, that every day my sense of joy
Grows more acute, my soul (intensified
By power and insight) more enlarged, more keen;
While every day my hairs fall more and more,
My hand shakes, and the heavy years increase —
The horror quickening still from year to year,
The consummation coming past escape,
When I shall know most, and yet least enjoy —
When all my works wherein I prove my worth,
Being present still to mock me in men's mouths,
Alive still, in the praise of such as thou,
I, I the feeling, thinking, acting man,
The man who loved his life so over-much,
Sleep in my urn. It is so horrible,
I dare at times imagine to my need
Some future state revealed to us by Zeus,
Unlimited in capability
For joy, as this is in desire for joy —
To seek which, the joy-hunger forces us:
That, stung by straitness of our life, made strait
On purpose to make prized the life at large —
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst there as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings. But no!
Zeus has not yet revealed it; and alas,
He must have done so, were it possible!

Live long and happy, and in that thought die —
Glad for what was! Farewell. And for the rest,
I cannot tell thy messenger aright
Where to deliver what he bears of thine
To one called Paulus; we have heard his fame
Indeed, if Christus be not one with him —
I know not, nor am troubled much to know.
Thou canst not think a mere barbarian Jew,
As Paulus proves to be, one circumcised,
Hath access to a secret shut from us?
Thou wrongest our philosophy, O king,
In stooping to inquire of such an one,
As if his answer could impose at all!
He writeth, doth he? well, and he may write.
Oh, the Jew findeth scholars! certain slaves
Who touched on this same isle, preached him and Christ;
And (as I gathered from a bystander)
Their doctrine could be held by no sane man.

(1855)

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336-353. **Live long . . . sane man.** Cf. the closing lines of *An Epistle*, page 261. 340-341. **Paulus . . . him.** Paul died about 67 A.D. Cleon is not sure whether Paul and Christ are different persons.

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## ONE WORD MORE

### TO E. B. B.

1

There they are, my fifty men and women
Naming me the fifty poems finished!
Take them, Love, the book and me together;
Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

2

Rafael made a century of sonnets,
Made and wrote them in a certain volume
Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
Else he only used to draw Madonnas;
These, the world might view — but one, the volume.
Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you.
Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,
Die, and let it drop beside her pillow
Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving —
Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

3

You and I would rather read that volume
(Taken to his beating bosom by it),
Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael,
Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas —
Her, San Sisto names, and Her, Foligno,
Her, that visits Florence in a vision,
Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre —
Seen by us and all the world in circle.

4

You and I will never read that volume.
Guido Reni, like his own eye's apple
Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
Guido Reni dying, all Bologna

---

*One Word More.* This poem was originally appended to the volume of Browning's poems called *Men and Women.* It is a deeply personal poem addressed to Mrs. Browning. Other poems written by Browning in praise of his wife are *My Star*, page 229, the selection from Book I of *The Ring and the Book*, page 298, Proem to *The Two Poets of Croisic*, and *By the Fireside.*

2. **Naming me,** furnishing me with the name of the volume. 5. **Rafael,** Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520), one of the greatest of Italian painters. Only four of his sonnets exist, and there is no authentic record of the others having been written. The "lady of the sonnets" of line 12 is said to have been named Margharita; her likeness appears in several of Raphael's paintings. 21-24. **Madonnas . . . Louvre.** Of the fifty or more Madonnas painted by Raphael, the four mentioned here are the most important: the *Sistine Madonna*, at Dresden; the *Madonna of Foligno*, at Rome; the *Madonna del Granduca*, at Florence; and probably the *Madonna of the Garden* (*La Belle Jardinière*), at the Louvre, in Paris. The one at Rome was painted as a votive offering for Sigismund Corti of Foligno; in the one at Florence the Madonna is represented as appearing to a votary in a vision. 27. **Guido Reni** (1575-1642), a painter of Bologna, a city in northern Italy. The "treasure-book" he owned contained one hundred of Raphael's original designs, but no sonnets.

Cried, and the world cried too, "Ours, the treasure!"
Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

5

Dante once prepared to paint an angel—
Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice."
While he mused and traced it and retraced it
(Peradventure with a pen corroded
Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,
Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,
Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,
Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle,
Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
Dante, who loved well because he hated,
Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
Dante standing, studying his angel—
In there broke the folk of his Inferno.
Says he—"Certain people of importance"
(Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)
"Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet."
Says the poet—"Then I stopped my painting."

6

You and I would rather see that angel,
Painted by the tenderness of Dante—
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno.

7

You and I will never see that picture.
While he mused on love and Beatrice,
While he softened o'er his outlined angel,
In they broke, those "people of importance";
We and Bice bear the loss forever.

8

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?
This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not
Once, and only once, and for one only,
(Ah, the prize!), to find his love a language
Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
Using nature that's an art to others,
Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.
Aye, of all the artists living, loving,
None but would forego his proper dowry—
Does he paint? he fain would write a poem—
Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,
Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
Once, and only once, and for one only,
So to be the man and leave the artist,
Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

9

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement!
He who smites the rock and spreads the water,
Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him,
Even he, the minute makes immortal,
Proves, perchance, but mortal in the minute,
Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
While he smites, how can he but remember,
So he smote before, in such a peril,
When they stood and mocked—"Shall smiting help us?"
When they drank and sneered—"A stroke is easy!"
When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
Throwing him for thanks—"But drought was pleasant."
Thus old memories mar the actual triumph;
Thus the doing savors of disrelish;
Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
Carelessness or consciousness—the gesture.
For he bears an ancient wrong about him,
Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
"How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?"
Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
"Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought was better."

10

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,
Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.
Never dares the man put off the prophet.

11

Did he love one face from out the thousands
(Were she Jethro's daughter, white and wifely,
Were she but the Ethiopian bondslave),
He would envy yon dumb patient camel,
Keeping a reserve of scanty water
Meant to save his own life in the desert;

---

32-33. **Dante . . . Beatrice.** Dante, Italy's greatest poet (1265-1321), loved Beatrice Portinari, whom he immortalized in his *Vita Nuova* and his *Divina Commedia*. At the close of the *Vita Nuova* Dante states that on the first anniversary of the death of Beatrice he wished to paint an angel as a memorial to her. He says too that he was interrupted by "certain people of importance" (line 46). 35-41. **Peradventure . . . Florence.** The *Divina Commedia* consists of the *Inferno*, the *Purgatorio*, and the *Paradiso*. Dante freely consigned his enemies, living or dead, to appropriate places in Inferno or Purgatory. Lines 35-41 refer to incidents in sections 32-33 of the *Inferno*. The man referred to in lines 37-38 was dead, but the man of lines 39-41 was alive. 57. **Bice,** Beatrice.

74. **He who,** etc. The experience of Moses is cited as an example of the "artist's sorrow." The story of the smiting of the rock by Moses is found in *Exodus*, 16-19, and in *Numbers*, 20. 95. **Egypt's . . . better.** The Israelites murmured against Moses in the wilderness because they had no food and said, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full" (*Exodus*, 16:3). 97. **Sinai-forehead's . . . brilliance,** a reference to the appearance of God in the thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai, as told in *Exodus*, 19. 101. **Jethro's daughter,** Zipporah, the wife of Moses (see *Exodus*, 2 and 18). 102. **the Ethiopian bondslave,** the Ethiopian woman whom Moses married (see *Numbers*, 12:1).

Ready in the desert to deliver
(Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
Hoard and life together for his mistress.

12

I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems — I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing;
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

13

Yet a semblance of resource avails us —
Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
Lines I write the first time and the last time.
He who works in fresco, steals a hair-brush,
Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
Fills his lady's missal-marge with flowerets.
He who blows through bronze may breathe through silver,
Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
He who writes may write for once as I do.

14

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,
Speak from every mouth — the speech, a poem.
Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving;
I am mine and yours — the rest be all men's,
Karshish, Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.
Let me speak this once in my true person,
Not as Lippo, Roland, or Andrea,
Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:
Pray you, look on these my men and women,
Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

15

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
Here in London, yonder late in Florence,
Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
Curving on a sky imbrued with color,
Drifted over Fiesole by twilight,
Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,
Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver,
Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

16

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
Nay; for if that moon could love a mortal,
Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos),
She would turn a new side to her mortal,
Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman —
Blank to Zoroaster on his terrace,
Blind to Galileo on his turret,
Dumb to Homer, dumb to Keats — him, even!
Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal —
When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
Opens out anew for worse or better!
Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
Swimming full upon the ship it founders,
Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?
Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire
Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu
Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest,
Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.
Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,
When they ate and drank and saw God also!

17

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know.
Only this is sure — the sight were other,

---

120. **Lines . . . time.** This is the only poem of Browning's written in rimeless five-foot trochaics. 125. **missal-marge,** border of the prayer-book. 136-138. **Karshish . . . Andrea.** Lines 136-138 mention the characters found in six of the poems included in *Men and Women.* 144-146. **Lo . . . thrice-transfigured.** They had recently watched the new moon in Florence; now in London they see her in her last quarter.

148. **Fiesole,** a suburb of Florence. 150. **Samminiato,** San Miniato, a church on the height above Florence, opposite Fiesole. 160. **mythos,** legend, myth. Lines 158-162 refer to myths concerning Endymion, the youth loved by Diana (the moon). 163. **Zoroaster,** the founder of the Persian religion, about 500 B.C. He studied the heavenly bodies while meditating upon religious themes. 164. **Galileo,** the great Italian physicist and astronomer (1564-1642). 165. **Homer,** a reference to Homer's "Hymn to Diana" in Book 21 of the *Iliad.* **Keats,** a reference to Keats's *Endymion.* Even Keats, whom Browning thus exalts above all others who had been entranced by the moon, had not caught all her magic. 176-179. **paved work . . . God also.** Cf. *Exodus,* 24:9-10.—"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness."

Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
Dying now impoverished here in London.
God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
Boasts two soul-sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her!

18

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
This to you — yourself my moon of poets!
Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder,
Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you!
There, in turn I stand with them and praise you —
Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
But the best is when I glide from out them,
Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
Come out on the other side, the novel
Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

19

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas,
Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
Wrote one song — and in my brain I sing it,
Drew one angel — borne, see, on my bosom!

R. B.

(*1855;* 1855)

## BEN KARSHOOK'S WISDOM

1

"Would a man 'scape the rod?"
Rabbi Ben Karshook saith,
"See that he turn to God
The day before his death."

"Aye, could a man inquire
When it shall come!" I say.
The Rabbi's eye shoots fire —
"Then let him turn today!"

2

Quoth a young Sadducee:
"Reader of many rolls,
Is it so certain we
Have, as they tell us, souls?"

"Son, there is no reply!"
The Rabbi bit his beard:
"Certain, a soul have *I* —
*We* may have none," he sneered.

Thus Karshook, the Hiram's-Hammer,
The Right-hand Temple-column,
Taught babes in grace their grammar,
And struck the simple, solemn.

(*1854;* 1856)

## TOO LATE

Here was I with my arm and heart
And brain, all yours for a word, a want
Put into a look — just a look, your part —
While mine, to repay it . . . vainest vaunt.
Were the woman, that's dead, alive to hear,
Had her lover, that's lost, love's proof to show!
But I cannot show it; you cannot speak
From the churchyard neither, miles removed,
Though I feel by a pulse within my cheek,
Which stabs and stops, that the woman I loved
Needs help in her grave and finds none near,
Wants warmth from the heart which sends it — so!

Did I speak once angrily, all the drear days
You lived, you woman I loved so well,
Who married the other? Blame or praise,
Where was the use then? Time would tell,
And the end declare what man for you,
What woman for me, was the choice of God.
But, Edith dead! no doubting more!
I used to sit and look at my life
As it rippled and ran till, right before,
A great stone stopped it; oh, the strife
Of waves at the stone some devil threw
In my life's midcurrent, thwarting God!

But either I thought, "They may churn and chide
Awhile, my waves which came for their joy
And found this horrible stone full-tide;
Yet I see just a thread escape, deploy
Through the evening-country, silent and safe,
And it suffers no more till it finds the sea."
Or else I would think, "Perhaps some night
When new things happen, a meteor-ball
May slip through the sky in a line of light,
And earth breathe hard, and landmarks fall,

---

*Ben Karshook's Wisdom.* *Karshook* is Hebrew for *thistle.* The character is imaginary.

9. **Sadducee.** The Sadducees were a sect of the Jews composed largely of the priestly aristocracy (2d century B.C. to 1st century A.D.). They denied the Resurrection, personal immortality, etc.

17-18. **Hiram's-Hammer . . . Temple-column,** a reference to Hiram, a Phœnician king, described as a skillful worker in brass on Solomon's Temple. He set up two brass pillars—the one on the right was named Jachin, signifying stability; the one on the left, Boaz, signifying strength (see *1 Kings*, 7:13-22).

And my waves no longer champ nor chafe,
Since a stone will have rolled from its place; let be!"

But, dead! All's done with; wait who may,
Watch and wear and wonder who will.
Oh, my whole life that ends today!
Oh, my soul's sentence, sounding still,
"The woman is dead that was none of his;
And the man that was none of hers may go!"
There's only the past left; worry that!
Wreak, like a bull, on the empty coat,
Rage, its late wearer is laughing at!
Tear the collar to rags, having missed his throat;
Strike stupidly on — "This, this, and this,
Where I would that a bosom received the blow!"

I ought to have done more; once my speech,
And once your answer, and there, the end,
And Edith was henceforth out of reach!
Why, men do more to deserve a friend,
Be rid of a foe, get rich, grow wise,
Nor, folding their arms, stare fate in the face.
Why, better even have burst like a thief
And borne you away to a rock for us two,
In a moment's horror, bright, bloody, and brief,
Then changed to myself again — "I slew
Myself in that moment; a ruffian lies
Somewhere; your slave, see, born in his place!"

What did the other do? You be judge!
Look at us, Edith! Here are we both!
Give him his six whole years; I grudge
None of the life with you, nay, loathe
Myself that I grudged his start in advance
Of me who could overtake and pass.
But, as if he loved you! No, not he,
Nor any one else in the world, 'tis plain;
Who ever heard that another, free
As I, young, prosperous, sound, and sane,
Poured life out, proffered it — "Half a glance
Of those eyes of yours and I drop the glass!"

Handsome, were you? 'Tis more than they held,
More than they said; I was 'ware and watched;
I was the scapegrace, this rat belled
The cat, this fool got his whiskers scratched.
The others? No head that was turned, no heart
Broken, my lady, assure yourself!
Each soon made his mind up; so and so
Married a dancer, such and such
Stole his friend's wife, stagnated slow,
Or maundered, unable to do as much,
And muttered of peace where he had no part;
While, hid in the closet, laid on the shelf —

On the whole, you were let alone, I think!
So you looked to the other, who acquiesced;
My rival, the proud man — prize your pink
Of poets! A poet he was! I've guessed;
He rimed you his rubbish nobody read,
Loved you and doved you — did not I laugh!
There was a prize! But we both were tried.
Oh, heart of mine, marked broad with her mark,
*Tekel*, found wanting, set aside,
Scorned! See, I bleed these tears in the dark
Till comfort come and the last be bled;
He? He is tagging your epitaph.

If it would only come over again!
— Time to be patient with me, and probe
This heart till you punctured the proper vein,
Just to learn what blood is; twitch the robe
From that blank lay-figure your fancy draped,
Prick the leathern heart till the — verses spirt!
And late it was easy; late, you walked
Where a friend might meet you; Edith's name
Arose to one's lip if one laughed or talked;
If I heard good news, you heard the same;
When I woke, I knew that your breath escaped;
I could bide my time, keep alive, alert.

And alive I shall keep and long, you will see!
I knew a man, was kicked like a dog
From gutter to cesspool; what cared he
So long as he picked from the filth his prog?
He saw youth, beauty, and genius die,
And jollily lived to his hundredth year.
But I will live otherwise; none of such life!
At once I begin as I mean to end.
Go on with the world, get gold in its strife,
Give your spouse the slip and betray your friend!
There are two who decline, a woman and I,
And enjoy our death in the darkness here.

I liked that way you had with your curls
Wound to a ball in a net behind;
Your cheek was chaste as a Quaker-girl's;

---

93. **Tekel**, one of the words of the mysterious writing on the wall of Belshazzar's palace, interpreted by Daniel (*Daniel*, 5:1-31). It means "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting" (v. 27). 96. **tagging**, supplying with rimes. 112. **prog**, food.

And your mouth — there was never, to my mind,
Such a funny mouth, for it would not shut;
And the dented chin too — what a chin!
There were certain ways when you spoke, some words
That you know you never could pronounce.
You were thin, however; like a bird's
Your hand seemed — some would say, the pounce
Of a scaly-footed hawk — all but!
The world was right when it called you thin.

But I turn my back on the world; I take
Your hand, and kneel, and lay to my lips.
Bid me live, Edith! Let me slake
Thirst at your presence! Fear no slips;
'Tis your slave shall pay, while his soul endures,
Full due, love's whole debt, *summum jus*.
My queen shall have high observance, planned
Courtship made perfect, no least line
Crossed without warrant. There you stand,
Warm too, and white too; would this wine
Had washed all over that body of yours,
Ere I drank it, and you down with it, thus!
(1864)

## ABT VOGLER

(AFTER HE HAS BEEN EXTEMPORIZING UPON THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OF HIS INVENTION)

Would that the structure brave, the manifold music I build,
Bidding my organ obey, calling its keys to their work,
Claiming each slave of the sound, at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,
Man, brute, reptile, fly — alien of end and of aim,
Adverse, each from the other heaven-high, hell-deep removed —
Should rush into sight at once as he named the ineffable Name,
And pile him a palace straight, to pleasure the princess he loved!

Would it might tarry like his, the beautiful building of mine,
This which my keys in a crowd pressed and importuned to raise!
Ah, one and all, how they helped, would dispart now and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise!
And one would bury his brow with a blind plunge down to hell,
Burrow awhile and build, broad on the roots of things,
Then up again swim into sight, having based me my palace well,
Founded it, fearless of flame, flat on the nether springs.

And another would mount and march, like the excellent minion he was,
Aye, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,
Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest;
For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire,
When a great illumination surprises a festal night —
Outlined round and round Rome's dome from space to spire)
Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight.

In sight? Not half! for it seemed, it was certain, to match man's birth,
Nature in turn conceived, obeying an impulse as I;
And the emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion, to scale the sky;
Novel splendors burst forth, grew familiar and dwelt with mine;
Not a point nor peak but found and fixed its wandering star —
Meteor-moons, balls of blaze; and they did not pale nor pine,
For earth had attained to heaven — there was no more near nor far.

Nay, more; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the Protoplast,

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138. **summum jus,** exact law, highest right.

*Abt Vogler.* Georg Joseph Vogler (1749-1814), also known as Abbé (or Abt) Vogler, was a noted German musician. He invented a kind of small organ called the orchestrion. He was a skilled organist and composer.

3. **as when Solomon willed.** According to legend, Solomon had power over supernatural beings through a seal bearing the name of God, the "ineffable Name" of line 7.

16. **nether springs,** deepest sources. 17. **minion,** servant. 19. **rampired,** having ramparts. 21-23. **For higher . . . spire.** The structure rises in his imagination like the fire that ascends streamers and illuminates St. Peter's from the open space between the colonnades to the cross on top of the dome. The cathedral is often illuminated for special festivals. 34. **fresh . . . Protoplast,** fresh from the mass of protoplasm—i.e., just created.

Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live, in a house to their liking at last;
Or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new.
What never had been, was now; what was, as it shall be anon;
And what is — shall I say, matched both? for I was made perfect, too.

All through my keys that gave their sounds to a wish of my soul,
All through my soul that praised as its wish flowed visibly forth,
All through music and me! For think, had I painted the whole,
Why, there it had stood, to see, nor the process so wonder-worth;
Had I written the same, made verse — still, effect proceeds from cause,
Ye know why the forms are fair, ye hear how the tale is told;
It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws,
Painter and poet are proud in the artist-list enrolled: —

But here is the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,
Existent behind all laws, that made them and, lo, they are!
And I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,
That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.
Consider it well: each tone of our scale in itself is naught;
It is everywhere in the world — loud, soft, and all is said —
Give it to me to use! I mix it with two in my thought —
And there! Ye have heard and seen; consider, and bow the head!

Well, it is gone at last, the palace of music I reared;
Gone! and the good tears start, the praises that come too slow;
For one is assured at first, one scarce can say that he feared,
That he even gave it a thought, the gone thing was to go.
Never to be again! But many more of the kind
As good, nay, better perchance; is this your comfort to me?
To me, who must be saved because I cling with my mind
To the same, same self, same love, same God; aye, what was, shall be.

Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?
Builder and maker, thou, of houses not made with hands!
What, have fear of change from thee who art ever the same?
Doubt that thy power can fill the heart that thy power expands?
There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect round.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once; we shall hear it by and by.

And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fullness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?
Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear,
Each sufferer says his say, his scheme of the weal and woe.

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43-44. **had I painted . . . wonder-worth,** if I had painted the structure, there it would be to look at; but the process of painting would not be worth much wonder since it would have conformed to recognized laws.

66. **Builder and maker.** Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (*Hebrews*, 11:10). **houses . . . hands.** "For we know that if our earthly house . . . were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (*2 Corinthians*, 5:1).

But God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know.

Well, it is earth with me; silence resumes her reign.
I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce.
Give me the keys. I feel for the common chord again,
Sliding by semitones till I sink to the minor — yes,
And I blunt it into a ninth, and I stand on alien ground,
Surveying awhile the heights I rolled from into the deep;
Which, hark, I have dared and done, for my resting-place is found,
The C Major of this life; so, now I will try to sleep. (1864)

## RABBI BEN EZRA

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made.
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned;
Youth shows but half. Trust God; see all, nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate — folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

vs. Rubaiyat

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast.
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence — a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks —
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me;
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test —
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn;
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once, "How good to live and learn"?

Not once beat, "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too;
Perfect I call thy plan.
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete — I trust what thou shalt do!"

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91-96. **common chord,** etc. As the musician had mounted to supreme heights of thought through the medium of his art, so he now descends to level ground. He strikes different chords—plaintive and poignant minors, then reassuring harmonies that lead at last to C major, the natural scale without variations of sharps and flats, hence symbolic of the common level of everyday life.

*Rabbi Ben Ezra.* Rabbi Ben Ezra was a distinguished Jewish philosopher, physician, astronomer, and poet of the 12th century. Although the ideas in the poem are drawn largely from his writings, the poem is one of the best expressions of Browning's own philosophy of life.

1. **Grow . . . me.** Cf. *Saul*, 161-164, page 216. The poem may be compared with FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*, page 416, and Arnold's *Growing Old*, page 484. 7. **Not that.** *Not that* of lines 7 and 10, and *Not for* of line 13 go with *Do I remonstrate* of line 15.

24. **Irks . . . bird,** does care irk the crop-full bird? 40-41. **What . . . me.** Cf. *Saul*, 295-296, page 219. 57. **I . . . too.** Cf. *Saul*, 242, 305-306, pages 218, 219.

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest.
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute — gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term.
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute — a god, though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new;
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold.
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame.
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray;
A whisper from the west
Shoots — "Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth. Here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain;
The Future I may face, now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act tomorrow what he learns today;
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made;
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age; wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me. We all surmise,
They this thing, and I that; whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass —
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,

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61-72. **For pleasant,** etc. Cf. *Fra Lippo Lippi,* 205-214, page 264. 81. **adventure . . . new,** the life after death. 84. **to indue,** to put on. 87. **Leave . . . ashes,** if the fire leaves ashes.

109-111. **As . . . made.** Cf. *Old Pictures in Florence,* page 224, in which Browning applies the idea of these lines to the development of art. 124. **Was I.** Supply *whom* after *I* and also after *they,* line 125.

All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Aye, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay —
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize today!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure.
What entered into thee,
*That* was, is, and shall be.
Time's wheel runs back or stops; Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, would fain arrest —
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Obj. [illegible]s making
by Potter on the

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash, and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I — to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily — mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst.

So, take and use Thy work;
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same! (1864)

## A DEATH IN THE DESERT

[Supposed of Pamphylax the Antiochene:
It is a parchment, of my rolls the fifth,
Hath three skins glued together, is all Greek,
And goeth from *Epsilon* down to *Mu;*
Lies second in the surnamed Chosen Chest,
Stained and conserved with juice of terebinth,
Covered with cloth of hair, and lettered *Xi*,
From Xanthus, my wife's uncle now at peace;
*Mu* and *Epsilon* stand for my own name.
I may not write it, but I make a cross
To show I wait His coming, with the rest,
And leave off here; beginneth Pamphylax.]

I said, "If one should wet his lips with wine,
And slip the broadest plantain-leaf we find,
Or else the lappet of a linen robe,
Into the water-vessel, lay it right,
And cool his forehead just above the eyes,
The while a brother, kneeling either side,
Should chafe each hand and try to make it warm —
He is not so far gone but he might speak."

This did not happen in the outer cave,
Nor in the secret chamber of the rock —
Where, sixty days since the decree was out,
We had him, bedded on a camel-skin,
And waited for his dying all the while —
But in the midmost grotto, since noon's light

---

151. **that Potter's wheel.** Cf. *Isaiah*, 64:8.—"But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." Cf. also FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát*, 325-360, pp. 421-22. 157-162. **Fool, etc.** Compare *Abt Vogler*, 69-80, page 279.

*A Death in the Desert.* This poem presents the account of an imaginary scene in which the aged Apostle St. John lies dying in a cave in the desert. He is attended and guarded by five devoted companions. The opening lines, 1-12, purport to have been written by the owner of the parchment in which the famous incident is recorded. The supposed author of the narrative was Pamphylax, of the city of Antioch, in Syria. He and Xanthus were present at the death of the Apostle.

2. **rolls**, manuscripts rolled up. 4. *Epsilon* and *Mu* and *Xi* (line 7) are letters of the Greek alphabet. *Epsilon* and *Mu* mark divisions of the parchment; *Xi* is its letter or number. 6. **terebinth**, the turpentine tree. 10. **I may not write it.** He is probably illiterate. 23. **the decree**, i.e., one for persecuting the Christians, probably the one issued by Domitian (51-96), the emperor of Rome.

Reached there a little, and we would not lose
The last of what might happen on his face.
I at the head, and Xanthus at the feet,
With Valens and the Boy, had lifted him,
And brought him from the chamber in the depths,
And laid him in the light where we might see;
For certain smiles began about his mouth,
And his lids moved, presageful of the end.

Beyond, and halfway up the mouth o' the cave,
The Bactrian convert, having his desire,
Kept watch, and made pretense to graze a goat
That gave us milk, on rags of various herb,
Plantain and quitch, the rocks' shade keeps alive—
So that if any thief or soldier passed
(Because the persecution was aware),
Yielding the goat up promptly with his life,
Such man might pass on, joyful at a prize,
Nor care to pry into the cool o' the cave.
Outside was all noon and the burning blue.

"Here is wine," answered Xanthus — dropped a drop;
I stooped and placed the lap of cloth aright,
Then chafed his right hand, and the Boy his left;
But Valens had bethought him, and produced
And broke a ball of nard, and made perfume.
Only, he did — not so much wake, as — turn
And smile a little, as a sleeper does
If any dear one call him, touch his face —
And smiles and loves, but will not be disturbed.

Then Xanthus said a prayer, but still he slept.
It is the Xanthus that escaped to Rome,
Was burned, and could not write the chronicle.

Then the Boy sprang up from his knees, and ran,
Stung by the splendor of a sudden thought,
And fetched the seventh plate of graven lead
Out of the secret chamber, found a place,
Pressing with finger on the deeper dints,
And spoke, as 'twere his mouth proclaiming first,
"I am the Resurrection and the Life."

Whereat he opened his eyes wide at once,
And sat up of himself, and looked at us;
And thenceforth nobody pronounced a word.
Only, outside, the Bactrian cried his cry
Like the lone desert-bird that wears the ruff,
As signal we were safe, from time to time.

First he said, "If a friend declared to me,
This my son Valens, this my other son,
Were James and Peter — nay, declared as well
This lad was very John — I could believe!
— Could, for a moment, doubtlessly believe;
So is myself withdrawn into my depths,
The soul retreated from the perished brain
Whence it was wont to feel and use the world
Through these dull members, done with long ago.
Yet I myself remain; I feel myself—
And there is nothing lost. Let be, awhile!"

[This is the doctrine he was wont to teach,
How divers persons witness in each man,
Three souls which make up one soul: first, to wit,
A soul of each and all the bodily parts,
Seated therein, which works, and is what Does,
And has the use of earth, and ends the man
Downward; but, tending upward for advice,
Grows into, and again is grown into
By the next soul, which, seated in the brain,
Useth the first with its collected use,
And feeleth, thinketh, willeth — is what Knows;
Which, duly tending upward in its turn,
Grows into, and again is grown into
By the last soul, that uses both the first,
Subsisting whether they assist or no,
And, constituting man's self, is what Is —
And leans upon the former, makes it play,
As that played off the first: and, tending up,
Holds, is upheld by, God, and ends the man
Upward in that dread point of intercourse,
Nor needs a place, for it returns to Him.
What Does, what Knows, what Is; three souls, one man.
I give the glossa as Theotypas.]

And then, "A stick, once fire from end to end;
Now, ashes save the tip that holds a spark!
Yet, blow the spark, it runs back, spreads itself
A little where the fire was. Thus I urge
The soul that served me, till it task once more

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30. **Valens**, one of the companions. 36. **The Bactrian convert**, one of St. John's converts from Bactria, a district of Afghanistan. 39. **quitch**, a kind of hardy grass. 41. **aware**, active, on the lookout. 50. **nard**, a kind of fragrant ointment. 60. **seventh plate**, one of the plates on which the *Gospel of John* was engraved. 61. **a place**, verse 25 of Chapter 11, of *John*.

69. **the lone desert-bird**, the sandpiper. 76. **my depths**, the depths of his absolute being, as explained in lines 93-102. 82-104. **This . . . Theotypas.** Lines 82-104 are inserted by Pamphylax on the authority of Theotypas (line 104), an imaginary commentator. 83. **witness**, show, appear. 104. **give the glossa as Theotypas**, supply a commentary or marginal note as Theotypas did.

What ashes of my brain have kept their shape,
And these make effort on the last o' the flesh,
Trying to taste again the truth of things"
(He smiled) — "their very superficial truth;
As that ye are my sons, that it is long
Since James and Peter had release by death,
And I am only he, your brother John,
Who saw and heard, and could remember all.
Remember all! It is not much to say.
What if the truth broke on me from above
As once and ofttimes? Such might hap again;
Doubtlessly He might stand in presence here,
With head wool-white, eyes flame, and feet like brass,
The sword and the seven stars, as I have seen —
I who now shudder only and surmise,
'How did your brother bear that sight and live?'

"If I live yet, it is for good, more love
Through me to men; be naught but ashes here
That keep awhile my semblance, who was John —
Still, when they scatter, there is left on earth
No one alive who knew (consider this!),
Saw with his eyes and handled with his hands
That which was from the first, the Word of Life.
How will it be when none more saith 'I saw'?

"Such ever was love's way: to rise, it stoops.
Since I, whom Christ's mouth taught, was bidden teach,
I went, for many years, about the world,
Saying 'It was so; so I heard and saw,'
Speaking as the case asked; and men believed.
Afterward came the message to myself
In Patmos isle; I was not bidden teach,
But simply listen, take a book and write,
Nor set down other than the given word,
With nothing left to my arbitrament
To choose or change. I wrote, and men believed.
Then — for my time grew brief, no message more,
No call to write again — I found a way,
And, reasoning from my knowledge, merely taught
Men should, for love's sake, in love's strength believe;
Or I would pen a letter to a friend
And urge the same as friend, nor less nor more.
Friends said I reasoned rightly, and believed.
But at the last, why, I seemed left alive
Like a sea-jelly weak on Patmos strand,
To tell dry sea-beach gazers how I fared
When there was mid-sea, and the mighty things;
Left to repeat, 'I saw, I heard, I knew,'
And go all over the old ground again,
With Antichrist already in the world,
And many Antichrists, who answered prompt,
'Am I not Jasper as thyself art John?
Nay, young, whereas through age thou mayest forget;
Wherefore, explain, or how shall we believe?'
I never thought to call down fire on such,
Or, as in wonderful and early days,
Pick up the scorpion, tread the serpent dumb;
But patient stated much of the Lord's life
Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work,
Since much that at the first, in deed and word,
Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,
Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
Fed through such years, familiar with such light,
Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
Of new significance and fresh result;
What first were guessed as points, I now knew stars,
And named them in the Gospel I have writ.
For men said, 'It is getting long ago;
Where is the promise of his coming?' — asked
These young ones in their strength, as loath to wait,
Of me who, when their sires were born, was old.
I, for I loved them, answered, joyfully,
Since I was there, and helpful in my age;
And, in the main, I think such men believed.
Finally, thus endeavoring, I fell sick;
Ye brought me here, and I supposed the end,
And went to sleep with one thought that, at least,
Though the whole earth should lie in wickedness,
We had the truth, might leave the rest to God.

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122-123. **With head . . . seven stars.** Based on *Revelation*, 1:12-17.—"I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst . . . one like unto the Son of man . . . His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass . . . And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead." 125. **your brother,** that is, himself. 130. **No one, etc.** St. John was the last of the men who had seen Christ. 140. **Patmos isle.** He was banished by Domitian, emperor of Rome (81-96), to the Isle of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea, in the year 95. 141. **take . . . write,** a reference to the command to write his vision, as told in Chapter 1 of *Revelation*.

148. **Men . . . believe.** The Gospel of John, in its mildness of tone and spirit, stresses the Godlikeness of Christ through his manifestation of divine love. 156. **I saw . . . knew.** These expressions appear frequently in *Revelation*. 158. **Antichrist,** a personification of sin and evil in the world. See *John*, 2:18, 22.

Yet now I wake in such decrepitude
As I have slidden down and fallen afar,
Past even the presence of my former self,
Grasping the while for stay at facts which snap,
Till I am found away from my own world,
Feeling for foothold through a blank profound,
Along with unborn people in strange lands,
Who say — I hear said or conceive they say —
'Was John at all, and did he say he saw?
Assure us, ere we ask what he might see!'

"And how shall I assure them? Can they share —
They, who have flesh, a veil of youth and strength
About each spirit, that needs must bide its time,
Living and learning still as years assist
Which wear the thickness thin, and let man see —
With me who hardly am withheld at all,
But shudderingly, scarce a shred between,
Lie bare to the universal prick of light?
Is it for nothing we grow old and weak,
We whom God loves? When pain ends, gain ends too.
To me, that story — aye, that Life and Death
Of which I wrote 'it was' — to me, it is;
— Is, here and now; I apprehend naught else.
Is not God now i' the world his power first made?
Is not his love at issue still with sin,
Visibly when a wrong is done on earth?
Love, wrong, and pain, what see I else around?
Yea, and the Resurrection and Uprise
To the right hand of the throne — what is it beside,
When such truth, breaking bounds, o'erfloods my soul,
And, as I saw the sin and death, even so
See I the need yet transiency of both,
The good and glory consummated thence?
I saw the power; I see the Love, once weak,
Resume the Power; and in this word 'I see,'
Lo, there is recognized the Spirit of both,
That moving o'er the spirit of man, unblinds
His eye and bids him look. These are, I see;
But ye, the children, his beloved ones too,
Ye need — as I should use an optic glass
I wondered at erewhile, somewhere i' the world,
It had been given a crafty smith to make;
A tube, he turned on objects brought too close,
Lying confusedly insubordinate
For the unassisted eye to master once:
Look through his tube, at distance now they lay,
Become succinct, distinct, so small, so clear!
Just thus, ye needs must apprehend what truth
I see, reduced to plain historic fact,
Diminished into clearness, proved a point
And far away; ye would withdraw your sense
From out eternity, strain it upon time,
Then stand before that fact, that Life and Death,
Stay there at gaze, till it dispart, dispread,
As though a star should open out, all sides,
Grow the world on you, as it is my world.

"For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
And hope and fear — believe the aged friend —
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is;
And that we hold thenceforth to the uttermost
Such prize despite the envy of the world,
And, having gained truth, keep truth; that is all.
But see the double way wherein we are led,
How the soul learns diversely from the flesh!
With flesh, that hath so little time to stay,
And yields mere basement for the soul's emprise,
Expect prompt teaching. Helpful was the light,
And warmth was cherishing, and food was choice
To every man's flesh, thousand years ago,
As now to yours and mine; the body sprang
At once to the height, and stayed: but the soul — no!
Since sages who, this noontide, meditate
In Rome or Athens, may descry some point
Of the eternal power, hid yestereve;
And, as thereby the power's whole mass extends,
So much extends the ether floating o'er
The love that tops the might, the Christ in God.
Then, as new lessons shall be learned in these
Till earth's work stop and useless time run out,
So duly, daily, needs provision be
For keeping the soul's prowess possible,
Building new barriers as the old decay,
Saving us from evasion of life's proof,
Putting the question ever, 'Does God love,
And will ye hold that truth against the world?'

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188-197. **Yet now . . . might see.** In these lines Browning prepares for the prophetic utterances of John against later attacks on Christian belief. Dying persons were long regarded as gifted with prophecy. Cf. Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, 656, page 467, and the dying prophecy of Gaunt in Shakespeare's *Richard II*, II, 1, 5-16. 208. **that story,** as recorded in the *Gospel of John*. 221-222. **I see . . . Power.** Cf. *Saul*, 305-306, page 219. 227. **optic glass,** some kind of optical toy or magnifying glass set in a tube.

Ye know there needs no second proof with good
Gained for our flesh from any earthly source;
We might go freezing, ages; give us fire —
Thereafter we judge fire at its full worth,
And guard it safe through every chance, ye know!
That fable of Prometheus and his theft,
How mortals gained Jove's fiery flower, grows old
(I have been used to hear the pagans own)
And out of mind; but fire, howe'er its birth,
Here is it, precious to the sophist now
Who laughs the myth of Æschylus to scorn,
As precious to those satyrs of his play,
Who touched it in gay wonder at the thing.
While were it so with the soul — this gift of truth,
Once grasped, were this our soul's gain safe, and sure
To prosper as the body's gain is wont —
Why, man's probation would conclude, his earth
Crumble; for he both reasons and decides,
Weighs first, then chooses: will he give up fire
For gold or purple, once he knows its worth?
Could he give Christ up were his worth as plain?
Therefore, I say, to test man, the proofs shift,
Nor may he grasp that fact like other fact,
And straightway in his life acknowledge it,
As, say, the indubitable bliss of fire.
Sigh ye, 'It had been easier once than now'?
To give you answer I am left alive;
Look at me who was present from the first!
Ye know what things I saw; then came a test,
My first, befitting me who so had seen:
'Forsake the Christ thou sawest transfigured, him
Who trod the sea and brought the dead to life?
What should wring this from thee!' — ye laugh and ask.
What wrung it? Even a torchlight and a noise,
The sudden Roman faces, violent hands,
And fear of what the Jews might do! Just that.
And it is written, 'I forsook and fled.'
There was my trial, and it ended thus.
Aye, but my soul had gained its truth, could grow;
Another year or two — what little child,
What tender woman, that had seen no least
Of all my sights, but barely heard them told,
Who did not clasp the cross with a light laugh,
Or wrap the burning robe round, thanking God?
Well, was truth safe forever, then? Not so.
Already had begun the silent work
Whereby truth, deadened of its absolute blaze,
Might need love's eye to pierce the o'erstretched doubt.
Teachers were busy, whispering 'All is true
As the aged ones report; but youth can reach
Where age gropes dimly, weak with stir and strain,
And the full doctrine slumbers till today.'
Thus, what the Roman's lowered spear was found,
A bar to me who touched and handled truth,
Now proved the glozing of some new shrewd tongue,
This Ebion, this Cerinthus, or their mates,
Till imminent was the outcry 'Save our Christ!'
Whereon I stated much of the Lord's life
Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work.
Such work done, as it will be, what comes next?
What do I hear say, or conceive men say,
'Was John at all, and did he say he saw?
Assure us, ere we ask what he might see!'

"Is this indeed a burden for late days,
And may I help to bear it with you all,
Using my weakness which becomes your strength?
For if a babe were born inside this grot,
Grew to a boy here, heard us praise the sun,
Yet had but yon sole glimmer in light's place —
One, loving him and wishful he should learn,
Would much rejoice himself was blinded first
Month by month here, so made to understand
How eyes, born darkling, apprehend amiss.
I think I could explain to such a child
There was more glow outside than gleams he caught,

---

279. **Prometheus . . . theft.** Grieved at the neglect of mankind by the gods, Prometheus stole fire from heaven and carried it in a hollow reed to man. In anger Zeus (Jove) bound Prometheus to a mountain where a vulture daily fed upon his liver. 283-285. **sophist . . . play.** The sophists were teachers of rhetoric, philosophy, and conduct, in ancient Greece. They flourished in the 5th century B.C. They ridiculed traditional mythology, such as the myth of Prometheus, which was used by Æschylus (525-456 B.C.), the great Greek tragic dramatist, in his *Prometheus Bound.* This was a dramatic trilogy, only one part of which is preserved; in the lost parts the satyrs may have touched the fire as Browning imagines. The satyrs were demigods, half man and half goat, given to riotous merriment. 305. **Who . . . life,** incidents recorded in *John,* 6:15-21, and 11:1-44.

310. **I forsook and fled.** The account of Christ's desertion by his disciples when he was betrayed and taken by the mob is found in *Matthew,* 26:47-56; *Mark,* 14:43-50; and *John,* 18:1-12. 326. **found,** i.e., found to be. 328. **proved,** i.e., proved to be. 329. **Ebion, Cerinthus.** Ebion and Cerinthus were early heretics who believed Jesus to have been a mere man, though possessed of divine power. The *Gospel of St. John* is said to have been written against them. St. Luke and St. Paul were also said to have written against them.

Aye, nor need urge 'I saw it, so believe!'
It is a heavy burden you shall bear
In latter days, new lands, or old grown strange,
Left without me, which must be very soon.
What is the doubt, my brothers? Quick with it!
I see you stand conversing, each new face,
Either in fields, of yellow summer eves,
On islets yet unnamed amid the sea;
Or pace for shelter 'neath a portico
Out of the crowd in some enormous town
Where now the larks sing in a solitude;
Or muse upon blank heaps of stone and sand
Idly conjectured to be Ephesus;
And no one asks his fellow any more
'Where is the promise of his coming?' but
'Was he revealed in any of his lives,
As Power, as Love, as Influencing Soul?'

"Quick, for time presses, tell the whole mind out,
And let us ask and answer and be saved!
My book speaks on, because it cannot pass;
One listens quietly, nor scoffs but pleads,
'Here is a tale of things done ages since;
What truth was ever told the second day?
Wonders, that would prove doctrine, go for naught.
Remains the doctrine, love; well, we must love,
And what we love most, power and love in one,
Let us acknowledge on the record here,
Accepting these in Christ. Must Christ then be?
Has he been? Did not we ourselves make him?
Our mind receives but what it holds, no more.
First of the love, then; we acknowledge Christ —
A proof we comprehend his love, a proof
We had such love already in ourselves,
Knew first what else we should not recognize.
'Tis mere projection from man's inmost mind,
And, what he loves, thus falls reflected back,
Becomes accounted somewhat out of him;
He throws it up in air, it drops down earth's,
With shape, name, story added, man's old way.
How prove you Christ came otherwise at least?
Next try the power: he made and rules the world;
Certes there is a world once made, now ruled,
Unless things have been ever as we see.
Our sires declared a charioteer's yoked steeds
Brought the sun up the east and down the west,
Which only of itself now rises, sets,
As if a hand impelled it and a will —
Thus they long thought, they who had will and hands;
But the new question's whisper is distinct,
Wherefore must all force needs be like ourselves?
We have the hands, the will; what made and drives
The sun is force, is law, is named, not known,
While will and love we do know; marks of these,
Eye-witnesses attest, so books declare —
As that, to punish or reward our race,
The sun at undue times arose or set
Or else stood still: what do not men affirm?
But earth requires as urgently reward
Or punishment today as years ago,
And none expects the sun will interpose;
Therefore it was mere passion and mistake,
Or erring zeal for right, which changed the truth.
Go back, far, farther, to the birth of things;
Ever the will, the intelligence, the love,
Man's! — which he gives, supposing he but finds,
As late he gave head, body, hands, and feet,
To help these in what forms he called his gods.
First, Jove's brow, Juno's eyes were swept away,
But Jove's wrath, Juno's pride continued long;
As last, will, power, and love discarded these,
So law in turn discards power, love, and will.
What proveth God is otherwise at least?
All else, projection from the mind of man!'

"Nay, do not give me wine, for I am strong,
But place my gospel where I put my hands.

"I say that man was made to grow, not stop;
That help, he needed once, and needs no more,
Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn:
For he hath new needs, and new helps to these.
This imports solely, man should mount on each
New height in view; the help whereby he mounts,

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353. **my brothers**, Christians of the distant future. 361. **Ephesus**, an ancient Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor. 368. **speaks on**, i.e., to future ages. 371. **What . . . day.** He seems to mean that tradition cannot be trusted. 385. **somewhat out of him**, something drawn out of him.

392-393. **a charioteer's . . . west.** In Greek mythology Phœbus Apollo, the sun-god, drove westerly all day in his flaming chariot of the sun. 405. **stood still.** At Joshua's command the sun stood still until the Gibeonites had avenged themselves upon their enemies (see *Joshua*, 10:12-14). 416. **Jove's . . . Juno's.** Juno was queen of the gods and wife of Jove. 418. **these**, Jove's wrath and Juno's pride. 424-431. **I say . . . the Truth.** These lines contain a favorite doctrine of Browning. Cf. *Andrea del Sarto*, 97-98, page 267; *Cleon*, 114, page 270; and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, page 280.

The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,
Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.
Man apprehends him newly at each stage
Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done;
And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved.
You stick a garden-plot with ordered twigs
To show inside lie germs of herbs unborn,
And check the careless step would spoil their birth;
But when herbs wave, the guardian twigs may go,
Since should ye doubt of virtues, question kinds,
It is no longer for old twigs ye look,
Which proved once underneath lay store of seed,
But to the herb's self, by what light ye boast,
For what fruit's signs are. This book's fruit is plain,
Nor miracles need prove it any more.
Doth the fruit show? Then miracles bade 'ware
At first of root and stem, saved both till now
From trampling ox, rough boar, and wanton goat.
What? Was man made a wheelwork to wind up,
And be discharged, and straight wound up anew?
No! — grown, his growth lasts; taught, he ne'er forgets;
May learn a thousand things, not twice the same.

"This might be pagan teaching; now hear mine.

"I say, that as the babe, you feed awhile,
Becomes a boy and fit to feed himself,
So, minds at first must be spoon-fed with truth;
When they can eat, babe's nurture is withdrawn.
I fed the babe whether it would or no;
I bid the boy or feed himself or starve.
I cried once, 'That ye may believe in Christ,
Behold this blind man shall receive his sight!'
I cry now, 'Urgest thou, *for I am shrewd*
*And smile at stories how John's word could cure —*
*Repeat that miracle and take my faith?*'
I say, that miracle was duly wrought
When, save for it, no faith was possible.
Whether a change were wrought i' the shows o' the world,
Whether the change came from our minds which see
Of shows o' the world so much as and no more
Than God wills for his purpose — what do I
See now, suppose you, there where you see rock
Round us? — I know not; such was the effect,
So faith grew, making void more miracles
Because too much; they would compel, not help.
I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.
Wouldst thou unprove this to re-prove the proved?
In life's mere minute, with power to use that proof,
Leave knowledge and revert to how it sprung?
Thou hast it; use it and forthwith, or die!

"For I say, this is death and the sole death,
When a man's loss comes to him from his gain,
Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,
And lack of love from love made manifest;
A lamp's death when, replete with oil, it chokes;
A stomach's when, surcharged with food, it starves.
With ignorance was surety of a cure.
When man, appalled at nature, questioned first,
'What if there lurk a might behind this might?'
He needed satisfaction God could give,
And did give, as ye have the written word;
But when he finds might still redouble might,
Yet asks, 'Since all is might, what use of will?'
— Will, the one source of might — he being man
With a man's will and a man's might, to teach
In little how the two combine in large —
That man has turned round on himself and stands,
Which in the course of nature is, to die.

"And when man questioned, 'What if there be love
Behind the will and might, as real as they?' —
He needed satisfaction God could give,
And did give, as ye have the written word;
But when, beholding that love everywhere,
He reasons, 'Since such love is everywhere,
And since ourselves can love and would be loved,

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460. **Behold . . . sight.** The healing of the blind man is recorded in *John*, 9:1-25. In 20:30-31 John states that the miracles "are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God."

498. **stands,** i.e., stands still.

We ourselves make the love, and Christ was not' —
How shall ye help this man who knows himself
That he must love and would be loved again,
Yet, owning his own love that proveth Christ,
Rejecteth Christ through very need of him?
The lamp o'erswims with oil, the stomach flags
Loaded with nurture, and that man's soul dies.

"If he rejoin, 'But this was all the while
A trick; the fault was, first of all, in thee,
Thy story of the places, names, and dates,
Where, when, and how the ultimate truth had rise —
Thy prior truth, at last discovered none,
Whence now the second suffers detriment.
What good of giving knowledge if, because
O' the manner of the gift, its profit fail?
And why refuse what modicum of help
Had stopped the after-doubt, impossible
I' the face of truth — truth absolute, uniform?
Why must I hit of this and miss of that,
Distinguish just as I be weak or strong,
And not ask of thee and have answer prompt,
Was this once, was it not once? — then and now
And evermore, plain truth from man to man.
Is John's procedure just the heathen bard's?
Put question of his famous play again,
How, for the ephemerals' sake, Jove's fire was filched,
And carried in a cane and brought to earth;
*The fact is in the fable*, cry the wise,
*Mortals obtained the boon, so much is fact,*
*Though fire be spirit and produced on earth.*
As with the Titan's, so now with thy tale;
Why breed in us perplexity, mistake,
Nor tell the whole truth in the proper words?'

"I answer, Have ye yet to argue out
The very primal thesis, plainest law —
Man is not God, but hath God's end to serve,
A master to obey, a course to take,
Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become?
Grant this, then man must pass from old to new,
From vain to real, from mistake to fact,
From what once seemed good, to what now proves best.
How could man have progression otherwise?
Before the point was mooted 'What is God?'
No savage man inquired 'What am myself?'
Much less replied, 'First, last, and best of things.'
Man takes that title now if he believes
Might can exist with neither will nor love,
In God's case — what he names now Nature's Law —
While in himself he recognizes love
No less than might and will: and rightly takes.
Since if man prove the sole existent thing
Where these combine, whatever their degree,
However weak the might or will or love,
So they be found there, put in evidence —
He is as surely higher in the scale
Than any might with neither love nor will,
As life, apparent in the poorest midge
(When the faint dust-speck flits, ye guess its wing),
Is marvelous beyond dead Atlas' self —
Given to the nobler midge for resting-place!
Thus, man proves best and highest — God, in fine,
And thus the victory leads but to defeat,
The gain to loss, best rise to the worst fall,
His life becomes impossible, which is death.

"But if, appealing thence, he cower, avouch
He is mere man, and in humility
Neither may know God nor mistake himself;
I point to the immediate consequence
And say, by such confession straight he falls
Into man's place, a thing nor God nor beast,
Made to know that he can know and not more;
Lower than God, who knows all and can all,
Higher than beasts, which know and can so far
As each beast's limit, perfect to an end,
Nor conscious that they know, nor craving more;
While man knows partly but conceives beside,
Creeps ever on from fancies to the fact,
And in this striving, this converting air
Into a solid he may grasp and use,
Finds progress, man's distinctive mark alone,
Not God's, and not the beasts' — God is, they are,
Man partly is and wholly hopes to be.
Such progress could no more attend his soul,
Were all it struggles after found at first
And guesses changed to knowledge absolute,
Than motion wait his body, were all else
Than it the solid earth on every side,
Where now through space he moves from rest to rest.
Man, therefore, thus conditioned, must expect

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523. **Had stopped,** would have stopped. 530. **the heathen bard's,** Æschylus's. 531. **famous play,** *Prometheus Bound.* 532. **ephemerals',** mortals'. 537. **the Titan's.** Prometheus belonged to the giant race of Titans. 540. **I answer.** Lines 540-633 express Browning's own philosophy.

552. **that title,** the title of "First, last, and best of things." 565. **Atlas' self.** Atlas was a giant Titan who warred against Zeus and who was forced to carry the heavens on his head and hands.

He could not, what he knows now, know at first;
What he considers that he knows today,
Come but tomorrow, he will find misknown;
Getting increase of knowledge, since he learns
Because he lives, which is to be a man,
Set to instruct himself by his past self:
First, like the brute, obliged by facts to learn,
Next, as man may, obliged by his own mind,
Bent, habit, nature, knowledge turned to law.
God's gift was that man should conceive of truth
And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake,
As midway help till he reach fact indeed.
The statuary, ere he mold a shape,
Boasts a like gift — the shape's idea — and next
The aspiration to produce the same;
So, taking clay, he calls his shape thereout,
Cries ever, 'Now I have the thing I see';
Yet all the while goes changing what was wrought,
From falsehood like the truth, to truth itself.
How were it had he cried, 'I see no face,
No breast, no feet i' the ineffectual clay'?
Rather commend him that he clapped his hands,
And laughed, 'It is my shape and lives again!'
Enjoyed the falsehood, touched it on to truth,
Until yourselves applaud the flesh indeed
In what is still flesh-imitating clay.
Right in you, right in him, such way be man's!
God only makes the live shape at a jet.
Will ye renounce this pact of creatureship?
The pattern on the Mount subsists no more,
Seemed awhile, then returned to nothingness;
But copies, Moses strove to make thereby,
Serve still and are replaced as time requires.
By these, make newest vessels, reach the type!
If ye demur, this judgment on your head,
Never to reach the ultimate, angels' law,
Indulging every instinct of the soul
There where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing!

"Such is the burden of the latest time.
I have survived to hear it with my ears,
Answer it with my lips; does this suffice?
For if there be a further woe than such,
Wherein my brothers struggling need a hand,
So long as any pulse is left in mine,
May I be absent even longer yet,
Plucking the blind ones back from the abyss,
Though I should tarry a new hundred years!"

But he was dead; 'twas about noon, the day
Somewhat declining. We five buried him
That eve, and then, dividing, went five ways,
And I, disguised, returned to Ephesus.

By this, the cave's mouth must be filled with sand.
Valens is lost, I know not of his trace;
The Bactrian was but a wild childish man,
And could not write nor speak, but only loved.
So, lest the memory of this go quite,
Seeing that I tomorrow fight the beasts,
I tell the same to Phœbas, whom believe!
For many look again to find that face,
Beloved John's to whom I ministered,
Somewhere in life about the world; they err—
Either mistaking what was darkly spoke
At ending of his book, as he relates,
Or misconceiving somewhat of this speech
Scattered from mouth to mouth, as I suppose.
Believe ye will not see him any more
About the world with his divine regard!
For all was as I say, and now the man
Lies as he lay once, breast to breast with God.

[Cerinthus read and mused; one added this:

"If Christ, as thou affirmest, be of men
Mere man, the first and best but nothing more —
Account him, for reward of what he was,
Now and forever, wretchedest of all.
For see; himself conceived of life as love,
Conceived of love as what must enter in,
Fill up, make one with his each soul he loved:
Thus much for man's joy, all men's joy for him.
Well, he is gone, thou sayest, to fit reward.
But by this time are many souls set free,
And very many still retained alive;
Nay, should his coming be delayed awhile,
Say, ten years longer (twelve years, some compute),
See if, for every finger of thy hands,
There be not found, that day the world shall end,
Hundreds of souls, each holding by Christ's word
That he will grow incorporate with all,

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623. **at a jet,** in a moment. 625. **pattern on the Mount,** a reference to the commandments given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai (see *Exodus*, 19-20).

652. **fight the beasts.** This was the method of his martyrdom. 653. **Phœbas,** the person to whom Pamphylax told the incident related in the poem. 658. **as he relates,** a reference to *John*, 21:20-25. When Christ appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection, Peter asked him what John should do. Jesus replied: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Verse 23 states that "then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. Yet Jesus said not unto him, He should not die; but, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?'" 662. **regard,** look. 666-687. **If Christ,** etc. These lines are addressed to Cerinthus (see note on line 329). Pamphylax states that Cerinthus could not be saved unless he accepted Christ as God.

With me as Pamphylax, with him as John,
Groom for each bride! Can a mere man do this?
Yet Christ saith, this he lived and died to do.
Call Christ, then, the illimitable God,
Or lost!"

But 'twas Cerinthus that is lost.]
(1864)

## CALIBAN UPON SETEBOS;

### OR, NATURAL THEOLOGY IN THE ISLAND

"Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself."

['Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best,
Flat on his belly in the pit's much mire,
With elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin.
And, while he kicks both feet in the cool slush,
And feels about his spine small eft-things course,
Run in and out each arm, and make him laugh;
And while above his head a pompion-plant,
Coating the cave-top as a brow its eye,
Creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard,
And now a flower drops with a bee inside,
And now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch—
He looks out o'er yon sea, which sunbeams cross
And recross till they weave a spider-web
(Meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times),
And talks to his own self, howe'er he please,
Touching that other, whom his dam called God.
Because to talk about Him, vexes — ha,
Could He but know! and time to vex is now,
When talk is safer than in winter-time.
Moreover Prosper and Miranda sleep
In confidence he drudges at their task;
And it is good to cheat the pair, and gibe,
Letting the rank tongue blossom into speech.]

Setebos, Setebos, and Setebos!
'Thinketh He dwelleth i' the cold o' the moon.

'Thinketh He made it, with the sun to match,
But not the stars; the stars came otherwise;
Only made clouds, winds, meteors, such as that;
Also this isle, what lives and grows thereon,
And snaky sea which rounds and ends the same.

'Thinketh, it came of being ill at ease;
He hated that He cannot change His cold,
Nor cure its ache. 'Hath spied an icy fish
That longed to 'scape the rock-stream where she lived,
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine
O' the lazy sea her stream thrusts far amid,
A crystal spike 'twixt two warm walls of wave;
Only, she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water, not her life
(Green-dense and dim-delicious, bred o' the sun),
Flounced back from bliss she was not born to breathe,
And in her old bounds buried her despair,
Hating and loving warmth alike: so He.

'Thinketh, He made thereat the sun, this isle,
Trees and the fowls here, beast and creeping thing;
Yon otter, sleek-wet, black, lithe as a leech;
Yon auk, one fire-eye in a ball of foam,
That floats and feeds; a certain badger brown
He hath watched hunt with that slant white-wedge eye
By moonlight; and the pie with the long tongue
That pricks deep into oakwarts for a worm,
And says a plain word when she finds her prize,
But will not eat the ants; the ants themselves
That build a wall of seeds and settled stalks
About their hole — He made all these and more,
Made all we see, and us, in spite; how else?
He could not, Himself, make a second self
To be His mate—as well have made Himself;
He would not make what He mislikes or slights,
An eyesore to Him, or not worth His pains;
But did, in envy, listlessness, or sport,
Make what Himself would fain, in a manner, be —
Weaker in most points, stronger in a few,

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683. **With me . . . John.** Christ and Pamphylax are to be one; so Christ and John.

*Caliban upon Setebos.* Caliban is a kind of semi-intellectual monster, one of the servants of Prospero and his daughter Miranda on the island in Shakespeare's *The Tempest.* He was the son of the witch Sycorax, who worshiped a god called Setebos, the god of the Patagonians. Caliban sees this god as a capricious and willful being like himself. The poem is therefore a satire on Calvinism and the anthropomorphic idea of God. The quotation at the head of the poem is taken from *Psalms,* 50:21. It is spoken by God to the wicked.

1-23. **'Will . . . speech.** In the first twenty-three lines Caliban describes his physical background and the reason for his theological speculations. In most of the poem he speaks of himself in the third person. 5. **eft-things,** lizard-like animals. 7. **pompion-plant,** a vine of the pumpkin family. 17. **Him.** Pronouns referring to Setebos are capitalized. 18. **time . . . now,** in summer, when Setebos is likely to be away from the island. In winter he would usually be at home, on or near the island.

33. **'Hath,** he (Caliban) hath. 50. **pie,** magpie.

Worthy, and yet mere playthings all the while,
Things He admires and mocks too — that is it.
Because, so brave, so better though they be,
It nothing skills if He begin to plague.
Look now, I melt a gourd-fruit into mash,
Add honeycomb and pods, I have perceived,
Which bite like finches when they bill and kiss,—
Then, when froth rises bladdery, drink up all,
Quick, quick, till maggots scamper through my brain;
Last, throw me on my back i' the seeded thyme,
And wanton, wishing I were born a bird.
Put case, unable to be what I wish,
I yet could make a live bird out of clay;
Would not I take clay, pinch my Caliban
Able to fly? — for, there, see, he hath wings,
And great comb like the hoopoe's to admire,
And there, a sting to do his foes offense;
There, and I will that he begin to live,
Fly to yon rock-top, nip me off the horns
Of grigs high up that make the merry din,
Saucy through their veined wings, and mind me not.
In which feat, if his leg snapped, brittle clay,
And he lay stupid-like — why, I should laugh;
And if he, spying me, should fall to weep,
Beseech me to be good, repair his wrong,
Bid his poor leg smart less or grow again —
Well, as the chance were, this might take or else
Not take my fancy; I might hear his cry,
And give the manikin three sound legs for one,
Or pluck the other off, leave him like an egg,
And lessoned he was mine and merely clay.
Were this no pleasure, lying in the thyme,
Drinking the mash, with brain become alive,
Making and marring clay at will? So He.

'Thinketh, such shows nor right nor wrong in Him,
Nor kind, nor cruel; He is strong and Lord.
'Am strong myself compared to yonder crabs
That march now from the mountain to the sea;
'Let twenty pass, and stone the twenty-first,
Loving not, hating not, just choosing so.
'Say, the first straggler that boasts purple spots
Shall join the file, one pincer twisted off;
'Say, this bruised fellow shall receive a worm,
And two worms he whose nippers end in red;
As it likes me each time, I do. So He.

Well then, 'supposeth He is good i' the main,
Placable if His mind and ways were guessed,
But rougher than His handiwork, be sure!
Oh, He hath made things worthier than Himself,
And envieth that, so helped, such things do more
Than He who made them! What consoles but this?
That they, unless through Him, do naught at all,
And must submit; what other use in things?
'Hath cut a pipe of pithless elder-joint
That, blown through, gives exact the scream o' the jay
When from her wing you twitch the feathers blue;
Sound this, and little birds that hate the jay
Flock within stone's throw, glad their foe is hurt.
Put case such pipe could prattle and boast forsooth,
"I catch the birds, I am the crafty thing,
I make the cry my maker cannot make
With his great round mouth; he must blow through mine!"
Would not I smash it with my foot? So He.

But wherefore rough, why cold and ill at ease?
Aha, that is a question! Ask, for that,
What knows — the something over Setebos
That made Him, or He, may be, found and fought,
Worsted, drove off, and did to nothing, perchance.
There may be something quiet o'er His head,
Out of His reach, that feels nor joy nor grief,
Since both derive from weakness in some way.
I joy because the quails come; would not joy
Could I bring quails here when I have a mind;
This Quiet, all it hath a mind to, doth.
'Esteemeth stars the outposts of its couch,
But never spends much thought nor care that way.
It may look up, work up — the worse for those
It works on! 'Careth but for Setebos
The many-handed as a cuttle-fish,
Who, making Himself feared through what He does,
Looks up, first, and perceives he cannot soar
To what is quiet and hath happy life;
Next looks down here, and out of very spite
Makes this a bauble-world to ape yon real,
These good things to match those as hips do grapes.

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71. **bladdery**, in bubbles like bladders. 75. **Put case**, etc. If Caliban were the Creator, he would do things out of spite or envy, or as an exercise of absolute will; so does Setebos. 79. **hoopoe**, a kind of bird with a beautiful crest. 83. **grigs**, crickets. 103. **Loving . . . so.** This line and lines 98-108 correspond with the Calvinistic doctrine of election and reprobation, whereby some persons are predestined to eternal life and others to eternal death.

'Tis solace making baubles, aye, and sport.
Himself peeped late, eyed Prosper at his books
Careless and lofty, lord now of the isle;
Vexed, 'stitched a book of broad leaves, arrow-shaped,
Wrote thereon, he knows what, prodigious words;
Has peeled a wand and called it by a name;
Weareth at whiles for an enchanter's robe
The eyed skin of a supple oncelot;
And hath an ounce sleeker than youngling mole,
A four-legged serpent he makes cower and couch,
Now snarl, now hold its breath and mind his eye,
And saith she is Miranda and my wife.
'Keeps for his Ariel a tall pouch-bill crane
He bids go wade for fish and straight disgorge;
Also a sea-beast, lumpish, which he snared,
Blinded the eyes of, and brought somewhat tame,
And split its toe-webs, and now pens the drudge
In a hole o' the rock and calls him Caliban —
A bitter heart that bides its time and bites.
'Plays thus at being Prosper in a way,
Taketh his mirth with make-believes. So He.

His dam held that the Quiet made all things
Which Setebos vexed only; 'holds not so.
Who made them weak, meant weakness He might vex.
Had He meant other, while His hand was in,
Why not make horny eyes no thorn could prick,
Or plate my scalp with bone against the snow,
Or overscale my flesh 'neath joint and joint,
Like an orc's armor? Aye — so spoil His sport!
He is the One now; only He doth all.

'Saith, He may like, perchance, what profits Him.
Aye, himself loves what does him good; but why?
'Gets good no otherwise. This blinded beast
Loves whoso places flesh-meat on his nose,
But, had he eyes, would want no help, but hate
Or love, just as it liked him; He hath eyes.
Also it pleaseth Setebos to work,
Use all His hands, and exercise much craft,
By no means for the love of what is worked.
'Tasteth, himself, no finer good i' the world
When all goes right, in this safe summer-time,
And he wants little, hungers, aches not much,
Than trying what to do with wit and strength.
'Falls to make something; 'piled yon pile of turfs,
And squared and stuck there squares of soft white chalk,
And, with a fish-tooth, scratched a moon on each,
And set up endwise certain spikes of tree,
And crowned the whole with a sloth's skull a-top,
Found dead i' the woods, too hard for one to kill.
No use at all i' the work, for work's sole sake;
'Shall some day knock it down again. So He.

'Saith He is terrible; watch His feats in proof!
One hurricane will spoil six good months' hope.
He hath a spite against me, that I know,
Just as He favors Prosper, who knows why?
So it is, all the same, as well I find.
'Wove wattles half the winter, fenced them firm
With stone and stake to stop she-tortoises
Crawling to lay their eggs here; well, one wave,
Feeling the foot of Him upon its neck,
Gaped as a snake does, lolled out its large tongue,
And licked the whole labor flat — so much for spite.

'Saw a ball flame down late (yonder it lies)
Where, half an hour before, I slept i' the shade.
Often they scatter sparkles; there is force!
'Dug up a newt He may have envied once
And turned to stone, shut up inside a stone.
Please Him and hinder this? — What Prosper does?
Aha, if He would tell me how! Not He!
There is the sport; discover how or die!
All need not die, for of the things o' the isle
Some flee afar, some dive, some run up trees.
Those at His mercy — why, they please Him most
When . . . when . . . well, never try the same way twice!
Repeat what act has pleased, He may grow wroth.
You must not know His ways, and play Him off,
Sure of the issue. 'Doth the like himself:
'Spareth a squirrel that it nothing fears
But steals the nut from underneath my thumb,

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156. **oncelot**, the ounce, or snow leopard. 161. **Ariel**, an airy spirit in the service of Prospero. 177. **orc**, a sea monster.

196. **sloth**, a slow-moving animal resembling the anteater. 205. **wattles**, twigs.

And when I threat, bites stoutly in defense;
'Spareth an urchin that contrariwise,
Curls up into a ball, pretending death
For fright at my approach — the two ways please.
But what would move my choler more than this,
That either creature counted on its life
Tomorrow and next day and all days to come,
Saying, forsooth, in the inmost of its heart,
"Because he did so yesterday with me,
And otherwise with such another brute,
So must he do henceforth and always." — Aye?
Would teach the reasoning couple what "must" means!
'Doth as he likes, or wherefore Lord? So He.

'Conceiveth all things will continue thus,
And we shall have to live in fear of Him
So long as He lives, keeps His strength; no change,
If He have done His best, make no new world
To please Him more, so leave off watching this —
If He surprise not even the Quiet's self
Some strange day — or, suppose, grow into it
As grubs grow butterflies; else, here we are,
And there is He, and nowhere help at all.

'Believeth with the life, the pain shall stop.
His dam held different, that after death
He both plagued enemies and feasted friends:
Idly! He doth His worst in this our life,
Giving just respite lest we die through pain,
Saving last pain for worst — with which, an end.
Meanwhile, the best way to escape His ire
Is, not to seem too happy. 'Sees, himself,
Yonder two flies, with purple films and pink,
Bask on the pompion-bell above; kills both.
'Sees two black painful beetles roll their ball
On head and tail as if to save their lives;
Moves them the stick away they strive to clear.

Even so, 'would have Him misconceive, suppose
This Caliban strives hard and ails no less,
And always, above all else, envies Him;
Wherefore he mainly dances on dark nights,
Moans in the sun, gets under holes to laugh,
And never speaks his mind save housed as now:
Outside, 'groans, curses. If He caught me here,
O'erheard this speech, and asked "What chucklest at?"
'Would, to appease Him, cut a finger off,
Or of my three kid yearlings burn the best,
Or let the toothsome apples rot on tree,
Or push my tame beast for the orc to taste —
While myself lit a fire, and made a song
And sung it, "*What I hate, be consecrate*
*To celebrate Thee and Thy state, no mate*
*For Thee; what see for envy in poor me?*"
Hoping the while, since evils sometimes mend,
Warts rub away, and sores are cured with slime,
That some strange day, will either the Quiet catch
And conquer Setebos, or likelier He
Decrepit may doze, doze, as good as die.

[What, what? A curtain o'er the world at once!
Crickets stop hissing; not a bird — or, yes,
There scuds His raven that has told Him all!
It was fool's play, this prattling! Ha! The wind
Shoulders the pillared dust, death's house o' the move,
And fast invading fires begin! White blaze —
A tree's head snaps — and there, there, there, there, there,
His thunder follows! Fool to gibe at Him!
Lo! 'Lieth flat and loveth Setebos!
'Maketh his teeth meet through his upper lip,
Will let those quails fly, will not eat this month
One little mess of whelks, so he may 'scape!]
(1864)

## CONFESSIONS

What is he buzzing in my ears?
"Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again
Where the physic bottles stand
On the table's edge — is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden-wall; is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labeled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace, somewhere near the stopper,
There watched for me, one June,
A girl; I know, sir, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of tune.

Only, there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except;
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help — their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labeled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate. Alas,
We loved, sir — used to meet;
How sad and bad and mad it was —
But then, how it was sweet! (1864)

## PROSPICE

Fear death? — to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go.
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!
(*1861;* 1864)

## YOUTH AND ART

It once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,
You thumbed, thrust, patted, and polished,
Then laughed "They will see some day
Smith made, and Gibson demolished."

My business was song, song, song;
I chirped, cheeped, trilled, and twittered,
"Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,
And Grisi's existence embittered!"

I earned no more by a warble
Than you by a sketch in plaster;
You wanted a piece of marble,
I needed a music-master.

We studied hard in our styles,
Chipped each at a crust like Hindus,
For air, looked out on the tiles,
For fun, watched each other's windows.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
Cap and blouse — nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
With fingers the clay adhered to.

And I — soon managed to find
Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
And be safe in my corset-lacing.

No harm! It was not my fault
If you never turned your eye's tail up
As I shook upon E *in alt.*,
Or ran the chromatic scale up;

For spring bade the sparrows pair,
And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in our street looked rare
With bulrush and watercresses.

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28. **Oes**, plural of *O*.
*Prospice.* The title means *Look Forward.* The poem was written shortly after the death of Mrs. Browning. See Critical Notes. Cf. *My Star*, page 229, and Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, page 166.

*Youth and Art.* Cf. *The Statue and the Bust*, page 239.
8. **Gibson**, John Gibson (1790-1866), a noted English sculptor. 12. **Grisi.** Giulia Grisi (1811-69) was a famous Italian singer. 18. **Chipped . . . Hindus.** Hindus are vegetarians. 31. **E in alt.**, high E.

Why did not you pinch a flower
In a pellet of clay and fling it?
Why did not I put a power
Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

I did look, sharp as a lynx
(And yet the memory rankles),
When models arrived, some minx
Tripped upstairs, she and her ankles.

But I think I gave you as good!
"That foreign fellow — who can know
How she pays, in a playful mood,
For his tuning her that piano?"

Could you say so, and never say,
"Suppose we join hands and fortunes,
And I fetch her from over the way,
Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes"?

No, no; you would not be rash,
Nor I rasher and something over.
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,
And Grisi yet lives in clover.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,
I'm queen myself at *bals-paré*,
I've married a rich old lord,
And you're dubbed knight and an R. A.

Each life unfulfilled, you see;
It hangs still, patchy and scrappy.
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
Starved, feasted, despaired — been happy.

And nobody calls you a dunce,
And people suppose me clever;
This could but have happened once,
And we missed it, lost it forever.

(1864)

## A FACE

If one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold,
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mold
Of those two lips, which should be opening soft
In the pure profile — not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all, but rather as if aloft
Yon hyacinth, she loves so, leaned its staff's
Burden of honey-colored buds to kiss
And capture 'twixt the lips apart for this.
Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped, perfect chin it lifts!
I know, Correggio loves to mass, in rifts
Of heaven, his angel faces, orb on orb
Breaking its outline, burning shades absorb;
But these are only massed there, I should think,
Waiting to see some wonder momently
Grow out, stand full, fade slow against the sky
(That's the pale ground you'd see this sweet face by),
All heaven, meanwhile, condensed into one eye
Which fears to lose the wonder, should it wink.

(1864)

## A LIKENESS

Some people hang portraits up
In a room where they dine or sup;
And the wife clinks tea-things under,
And her cousin, he stirs his cup,
Asks, "Who was the lady, I wonder?"
"'Tis a daub John bought at a sale,"
Quoth the wife — looks black as thunder.
"What a shade beneath her nose!
Snuff-taking, I suppose" —
Adds the cousin, while John's corns ail.

Or else, there's no wife in the case,
But the portrait's queen of the place,
Alone 'mid the other spoils
Of youth — masks, gloves, and foils,
And pipe-sticks, rose, cherry-tree, jasmine,
And the long whip, the tandem-lasher,
And the cast from a fist ("not, alas! mine,
But my master's, the Tipton Slasher"),
And the cards where pistol-balls mark ace,
And a satin shoe used for cigar-case,
And the chamois-horns ("shot in the Chablais"),
And prints — Rarey drumming on Cruiser,
And Sayers, our champion, the bruiser,
And the little edition of Rabelais:
Where a friend, with both hands in his pockets,
May saunter up close to examine it,
And remark a good deal of Jane Lamb in it,
"But the eyes are half out of their sockets;
That hair's not so bad, where the gloss is,
But they've made the girl's nose a proboscis;
Jane Lamb, that we danced with at Vichy!
What, is not she Jane? Then, who is she?"

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57. **meet . . . Board**, dine with the Prince at Board of Trade dinners. 58. **bals-paré**, fancy-dress balls. 60. **R. A.**, member of the Royal Academy, a British society for the promotion of painting, sculpture, and architecture.

14. **Correggio**, a famous Italian painter (1494-1534).
*A Likeness.* 18. **the Tipton Slasher**, an English boxer. 21. **Chablais**, a district in southeastern France. 22. **Rarey**, J. S. Rarey (c. 1825-66), a famous American horse tamer who subdued vicious animals by firm but gentle treatment. **Cruiser**, the name of one of Rarey's horses. 23. **Sayers**, Tom Sayers (1826-65), an English prize fighter. 24. **Rabelais**, a celebrated French satirist and humorist of the early 16th century. 31. **Vichy**, a town in central France.

All that I own is a print,
An etching, a mezzotint;
'Tis a study, a fancy, a fiction,
Yet a fact (take my conviction)
Because it has more than a hint
Of a certain face I never
Saw elsewhere touch or trace of
In women I've seen the face of:
Just an etching, and, so far, clever.

I keep my prints, an imbroglio,
Fifty in one portfolio.
When somebody tries my claret,
We turn round chairs to the fire,
Chirp over days in a garret,
Chuckle o'er increase of salary,
Taste the good fruits of our leisure,
Talk about pencil and lyre,
And the National Portrait Gallery;
Then I exhibit my treasure.
After we've turned over twenty,
And the debt of wonder my crony owes
Is paid to my Marc Antonios,
He stops me — "*Festina lentè!*
What's that sweet thing there, the etching?"
How my waistcoat-strings want stretching,
How my cheeks grow red as tomatoes,
How my heart leaps! But hearts, after leaps, ache.

"By the bye, you must take, for a keepsake,
That other, you praised, of Volpato's."
The fool! would he try a flight further and say —
He never saw, never before today,
What was able to take his breath away,
A face to lose youth for, to occupy age
With the dream of, meet death with — why, I'll not engage
But that, half in a rapture and half in a rage,
I should toss him the thing's self — " 'Tis only a duplicate,
A thing of no value! Take it, I supplicate!"
(1864)

## APPARENT FAILURE

"We shall soon lose a celebrated building."
——*Paris Newspaper*

No, for I'll save it! Seven years since,
I passed through Paris, stopped a day
To see the baptism of your Prince;
Saw, made my bow, and went my way.
Walking the heat and headache off,
I took the Seine-side, you surmise,
Thought of the Congress, Gortschakoff,
Cavour's appeal and Buol's replies,
So sauntered till — what met my eyes?

Only the Doric little Morgue!
The dead-house where you show your drowned.
Petrarch's Vaucluse makes proud the Sorgue;
Your Morgue has made the Seine renowned.
One pays one's debt in such a case;
I plucked up heart and entered — stalked,
Keeping a tolerable face
Compared with some whose cheeks were chalked.
Let them! No Briton's to be balked!

First came the silent gazers; next,
A screen of glass, we're thankful for;
Last, the sight's self, the sermon's text,
The three men who did most abhor
Their life in Paris yesterday,
So killed themselves; and now, enthroned
Each on his copper couch, they lay
Fronting me, waiting to be owned.
I thought, and think, their sin's atoned.

Poor men, God made, and all for that!
The reverence struck me; o'er each head
Religiously was hung its hat,
Each coat dripped by the owner's bed,
Sacred from touch; each had his berth,
His bounds, his proper place of rest,
Who last night tenanted on earth
Some arch, where twelve such slept abreast —
Unless the plain asphalt seemed best.

How did it happen, my poor boy?
You wanted to be Buonaparte
And have the Tuileries for toy,
And could not, so it broke your heart?
You, old one by his side, I judge,
Were, red as blood, a socialist,
A leveler! Does the Empire grudge
You've gained what no Republic missed?
Be quiet, and unclench your fist!

And this — why, he was red in vain,
Or black — poor fellow that is blue!
What fancy was it turned your brain?

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42. **imbroglio,** a confused mass. 54. **Marc Antonios,** pictures by Marcantonio Raimondi (c. 1480-1540), a noted Italian engraver. 55. **Festina lentè,** make haste slowly. 61. **Volpato,** Giovanni Volpato (c. 1735-1803), an eminent Italian engraver.

*Apparent Failure.* Browning wrote this poem in an effort to save from destruction the famous Paris Morgue on the bank of the Seine River. He had visited the Morgue in 1856, when he was first in Paris to see the baptism of Prince Louis Napoleon, son of Emperor Napoleon III, born March 16, 1856.

7. **the Congress.** The Congress of Paris, composed of representatives of several European powers, met in Paris in 1856 to discuss the unity of Italy. Prince Alexander Gortchakoff (1798-1883) represented Russia; Count Camillo di Cavour (1810-61), Sardinia; Count von Buol-Schauenstein (1797-1865), Austria. Cavour was the great unifier of Italy. 12. **Vaucluse.** The Fountain of Vaucluse is the source of the Sorgue River in southeastern France. The famous Italian poet Petrarch (1304-74) once lived in Vaucluse, near Avignon. 39. **Tuileries,** the royal palace in Paris. 46-47. **red . . . black,** a reference to the gambling game of *rouge-et-noir*—red and black—named from colors on the table.

Oh, women were the prize for you!
Money gets women, cards and dice
Get money, and ill-luck gets just
The copper couch and one clear nice
Cool squirt of water o'er your bust,
The right thing to extinguish lust!

It's wiser being good than bad;
It's safer being meek than fierce;
It's fitter being sane than mad.
My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst.
(1864)

## From *THE RING AND THE BOOK*

### From BOOK I

### THE RING AND THE BOOK

O lyric Love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire —
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face —
Yet human at the red-ripe of the heart —
When the first summons from the darkling earth
Reached thee amid thy chambers, blanched their blue,
And bared them of the glory — to drop down,
To toil for man, to suffer or to die —
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change?
Hail then, and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand —
That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendor once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile:
— Never conclude, but raising hand and head
Thither where eyes, that cannot reach, yet yearn
For all hope, all sustainment, all reward,
Their utmost up and on — so blessing back
In those thy realms of help, that heaven thy home,
Some whiteness which, I judge, thy face makes proud,
Some wanness where, I think, thy foot may fall!

Platonic

intense, passionate appeal
fitting to mood of R. & B.

### BOOK VI

### GIUSEPPE CAPONSACCHI

Answer you, Sirs? Do I understand aright?
Have patience! In this sudden smoke from hell —
So things disguise themselves — I cannot see
My own hand held thus broad before my face
And know it again. Answer you? Then that means
Tell over twice what I, the first time, told
Six months ago, 'twas here, I do believe,
Fronting you same three in this very room,
I stood and told you; yet now no one laughs,
Who then . . . nay, dear my lords, but laugh you did,
As good as laugh, what in a judge we style
Laughter — no levity, nothing indecorous, lords!
Only — I think I apprehend the mood:
There was the blameless shrug, permissible smirk,
The pen's pretense at play with the pursed mouth,
The titter stifled in the hollow palm
Which rubbed the eyebrow and caressed the nose,
When I first told my tale; they meant, you know,
"The sly one, all this we are bound believe!
Well, he can say no other than what he says.
We have been young, too — come, there's greater guilt!
Let him but decently disembroil himself,
Scramble from out the scrape nor move the mud —
We solid ones may risk a finger-stretch!"
And now you sit as grave, stare as aghast
As if I were a phantom; now 'tis — "Friend,
Collect yourself!" — no laughing matter more —
"Counsel the Court in this extremity,
Tell us again!" — tell that, for telling which,
I got the jocular piece of punishment,
Was sent to lounge a little in the place
Whence now of a sudden here you summon me

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*The Ring and the Book.* See Critical Notes.

*Book I.* 1-25. **O lyric Love,** etc. These are the closing lines of Book I. They are intended as an invocation to Mrs. Browning, who died in 1861. 23. **so blessing back,** etc. My eyes yearn for reward from you in heaven—a glimpse of some whiteness glorified by your presence, of some wanness reflected wherever you walk, which will be evidence of your blessing to me. *Blessing* is a participle modifying *whiteness* and *wanness;* both nouns are parallel in construction with *hope* and *reward* (line 22).

*Book VI. Giuseppe Caponsacchi.* Caponsacchi, summoned before the Court, tells the story of his efforts to help Pompilia. He had told the same story some months before when on trial with Pompilia. While he is speaking, Pompilia is in the hospital, dying from wounds inflicted by Guido.

30. **jocular . . . punishment.** The Court had previously decided against Pompilia and Caponsacchi and had banished Caponsacchi for three years to Civita Vecchia, a seaport near Rome. Pompilia had been sent to a convent.

To take the intelligence from just — your lips!
You, Judge Tommati, who then tittered most —
That she I helped eight months since to escape
Her husband, was retaken by the same,
Three days ago, if I have seized your sense
(I being disallowed to interfere,
Meddle or make in a matter none of mine,
For you and law were guardians quite enough
O' the innocent, without a pert priest's help) —
And that he has butchered her accordingly,
As she foretold and as myself believed —
And, so foretelling and believing so,
We were punished, both of us, the merry way:
Therefore, tell once again the tale! For what?
Pompilia is only dying while I speak!
Why does the mirth hang fire and miss the smile?
My masters, there's an old book, you should con
For strange adventures, applicable yet,
'Tis stuffed with. Do you know that there was once
This thing: a multitude of worthy folk
Took recreation, watched a certain group
Of soldiery intent upon a game —
How first they wrangled, but soon fell to play,
Threw dice — the best diversion in the world.
A word in your ear — they are now casting lots,
Aye, with that gesture quaint and cry uncouth,
For the coat of One murdered an hour ago!
I am a priest — talk of what I have learned.
Pompilia is bleeding out her life belike,
Gasping away the latest breath of all,
This minute, while I talk — not while you laugh.

Yet, being sobered now, what is it you ask
By way of explanation? There's the fact!
It seems to fill the universe with sight
And sound — from the four corners of this earth
Tells itself over, to my sense at least.
But you may want it lower set i' the scale —
Too vast, too close it clangs in the ear, perhaps;
You'd stand back just to comprehend it more.
Well then, let me, the hollow rock, condense
The voice o' the sea and wind, interpret you
The mystery of this murder. God above!
It is too paltry, such a transference
O' the storm's roar to the cranny of the stone!
This deed, you saw begin — why does its end
Surprise you? Why should the event enforce
The lesson, we ourselves learned, she and I,
From the first o' the fact, and taught you, all in vain?
This Guido from whose throat you took my grasp,
Was this man to be favored, now, or feared,
Let do his will, or have his will restrained,
In the relation with Pompilia? — say!
Did any other man need interpose —
Oh, though first comer, though as strange at the work
As fribble must be, coxcomb, fool that's near
To knave as, say, a priest who fears the world —
Was he bound brave the peril, save the doomed,
Or go on, sing his snatch and pluck his flower,
Keep the straight path and let the victim die?
I held so; you decided otherwise,
Saw no such peril, therefore no such need
To stop song, loosen flower, and leave path. Law,
Law was aware and watching, would suffice,
Wanted no priest's intrusion, palpably
Pretense, too manifest a subterfuge!
Whereupon I, priest, coxcomb, fribble, and fool,
Ensconced me in my corner, thus rebuked,
A kind of culprit, over-zealous hound
Kicked for his pains to kennel; I gave place
To you, and let the law reign paramount:
I left Pompilia to your watch and ward,
And now you point me — there and thus she lies!

Men, for the last time, what do you want with me?
Is it — you acknowledge, as it were, a use,
A profit in employing me? — at length
I may conceivably help the august law?
I am free to break the blow, next hawk that swoops
On next dove, nor miss much of good repute?
Or what if this your summons, after all,
Be but the form of mere release, no more,
Which turns the key and lets the captive go?
I have paid enough in person at Civita,
Am free — what more need I concern me with?
Thank you! I am rehabilitated then,
A very reputable priest. But she —
The glory of life, the beauty of the world,
The splendor of heaven . . . well, Sirs, does no one move?
Do I speak ambiguously? The glory, I say,
And the beauty, I say, and splendor, still say I,

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**57-59. casting lots . . . One.** Cf. *Matthew*, 27:35.—"And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, 'They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.'"

**87. fribble**, a frivolous person.

Who, priest and trained to live my whole life long
On beauty and splendor, solely at their source,
God — have thus recognized my food in her,
You tell me, that's fast dying while we talk,
Pompilia! How does lenity to me
Remit one death-bed pang to her? Come, smile!
The proper wink at the hot-headed youth
Who lets his soul show, through transparent words,
The mundane love that's sin and scandal too!
You are all struck acquiescent now, it seems;
It seems the oldest, gravest signor here,
Even the redoubtable Tommati, sits
Chopfallen — understands how law might take
Service like mine, of brain and heart and hand,
In good part. Better late than never, law!
You understand of a sudden, gospel too
Has a claim here, may possibly pronounce
Consistent with my priesthood, worthy Christ,
That I endeavored to save Pompilia?

Then,
You were wrong, you see. That's well to see, though late.
That's all we may expect of man, this side
The grave; his good is — knowing he is bad.
Thus will it be with us when the books ope
And we stand at the bar on judgment-day.
Well, then, I have a mind to speak, see cause
To relume the quenched flax by this dreadful light,
Burn my soul out in showing you the truth.
I heard, last time I stood here to be judged,
What is priest's-duty — labor to pluck tares
And weed the corn of Molinism; let me
Make you hear, this time, how, in such a case,
Man, be he in the priesthood or at plow,
Mindful of Christ or marching step by step
With . . . what's his style, the other potentate
Who bids have courage and keep honor safe,
Nor let minuter admonition tease? —
How he is bound, better or worse, to act.
Earth will not end through this misjudgment, no!
For you and the others like you sure to come,
Fresh work is sure to follow — wickedness
That wants withstanding. Many a man of blood,
Many a man of guile will clamor yet,
Bid you redress his grievance — as he clutched
The prey, forsooth a stranger stepped between,
And there's the good gripe in pure waste! My part
Is done; i' the doing it, I pass away
Out of the world. I want no more with earth.
Let me, in heaven's name, use the very snuff
O' the taper in one last spark shall show truth
For a moment, show Pompilia who was true!
Not for her sake, but yours; if she is dead,
Oh, Sirs, she can be loved by none of you
Most or least priestly! Saints, to do us good,
Must be in heaven, I seem to understand;
We never find them saints before, at least.
Be her first prayer then presently for you —
She has done the good to me . . .
What is all this?
There, I was born, have lived, shall die, a fool!
This is a foolish outset — might with cause
Give color to the very lie o' the man,
The murderer — make as if I loved his wife
In the way he called love. He is the fool there!
Why, had there been in me the touch of taint,
I had picked up so much of knaves'-policy
As hide it, keep one hand pressed on the place
Suspected of a spot would damn us both.
Or no, not her! — not even if any of you
Dares think that I, i' the face of death, her death
That's in my eyes and ears and brain and heart,
Lie — if he does, let him! I mean to say,
So he stop there, stay thought from smirching her
The snow-white soul that angels fear to take
Untenderly. But, all the same, I know
I too am taintless, and I bare my breast.
You can't think, men as you are, all of you,
But that, to hear thus suddenly such an end
Of such a wonderful white soul, that comes
Of a man and murderer calling the white black,
Must shake me, trouble and disadvantage. Sirs,
Only seventeen!

Why, good and wise you are!
You might at the beginning stop my mouth;
So, none would be to speak for her, that knew.
I talk impertinently, and you bear,
All the same. This it is to have to do
With honest hearts; they easily may err,
But in the main they wish well to the truth.
You are Christians; somehow, no one ever plucked
A rag, even, from the body of the Lord,
To wear and mock with, but, despite himself,
He looked the greater and was the better. Yes,
I shall go on now. Does she need or not

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151. **Molinism**, the doctrine taught by Miguel de Molinos (1640-97), a Spanish priest who lived in Rome. He considered abstinence, penance, etc., of little value except at the beginning of a course of self-discipline. His teaching was condemned by the Pope in 1687. 155. **potentate**, a satirical reference to Satan.

I keep calm? Calm I'll keep as monk that croons
Transcribing battle, earthquake, famine, plague,
From parchment to his cloister's chronicle.
Not one word more from the point now!

I begin.
Yes, I am one of your body and a priest.
Also I am younger son o' the House
Oldest now, greatest once, in my birth-town
Arezzo, I recognize no equal there —
(I want all arguments, all sorts of arms
That seem to serve — use this for a reason, wait!),
Not therefore thrust into the Church, because
O' the piece of bread one gets there. We were first
Of Fiesole, that rings still with the fame
Of Capo-in-Sacco, our progenitor.
When Florence ruined Fiesole, our folk
Migrated to the victor-city, and there
Flourished — our palace and our tower attest,
In the Old Mercato — this was years ago,
Four hundred, full — no, it wants fourteen just.
Our arms are those of Fiesole itself,
The shield quartered with white and red; a branch
Are the Salviati of us, nothing more.
That were good help to the Church? But better still —
Not simply for the advantage of my birth
I' the way of the world, was I proposed for priest;
But because there's an illustration, late
I' the day, that's loved and looked to as a saint
Still in Arezzo, he was bishop of,
Sixty years since; he spent to the last doit
His bishop's-revenue among the poor,
And used to tend the needy and the sick,
Barefoot, because of his humility.
He it was — when the Granduke Ferdinand
Swore he would raze our city, plow the place
And sow it with salt, because we Aretines
Had tied a rope about the neck, to hale
The statue of his father from its base
For hate's sake — he availed by prayers and tears
To pacify the Duke and save the town.
This was my father's father's brother. You see,
For his sake, how it was I had a right
To the selfsame office, bishop in the egg,
So, grew i' the garb and prattled in the school,
Was made expect, from infancy almost,
The proper mood o' the priest; till time ran by
And brought the day when I must read the vows,
Declare the world renounced, and undertake
To become priest and leave probation — leap
Over the ledge into the other life,
Having gone trippingly hitherto up to the height
O'er the wan water. Just a vow to read!

I stopped short, awe-struck. "How shall holiest flesh
Engage to keep such vow inviolate,
How much less mine? I know myself too weak,
Unworthy! Choose a worthier, stronger man!"
And the very Bishop smiled and stopped my mouth
In its mid-protestation. "Incapable?
Qualmish of conscience? Thou ingenuous boy!
Clear up the clouds and cast thy scruples far!
I satisfy thee there's an easier sense
Wherein to take such vow than suits the first
Rough rigid reading. Mark what makes all smooth,
Nay, has been even a solace to myself!
The Jews who needs must, in their synagogue,
Utter sometimes the holy name of God,
A thing their superstition boggles at,
Pronounce aloud the ineffable sacrosanct —
How does their shrewdness help them? In this wise:
Another set of sounds they substitute,
Jumble so consonants and vowels — how
Should I know? — that there grows from out the old
Quite a new word that means the very same —
And o'er the hard place slide they with a smile.
Giuseppe Maria Caponsacchi mine,
Nobody wants you in these latter days
To prop the Church by breaking your backbone —
As the necessary way was once, we know,

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218-219. **son . . . Oldest.** Caponsacchi's church was that of S. Maria della Pieve, in Arezzo, a city about 100 miles north of Rome. 222. **use . . . wait,** I use this reference to my church for a reason that will appear later. 225. **Fiesole,** a suburb of Florence. 226. **Capo-in-Sacco.** The name means *Head in the Sack.* 227. **Florence ruined Fiesole.** This happened in 1125, although Caponsacchi's exact figures (line 231) would place the event in 1312, which is 386 years before the time of his speech—1698. Dante refers to the moving of the Caponsacchi family from Fiesole to Florence in *Paradiso*, 15:139-148, written about 1312. It is mentioned by one of Dante's ancestors who died about 1148. A lady of the Caponsacchi family was the mother of Dante's Beatrice. 230. **Old Mercato,** the old market-place in Florence. 234. **Salviati,** a well-known Italian family. 241. **doit,** a small Dutch coin, worth about one-fourth of a cent. 245. **the Granduke Ferdinand,** Ferdinand II, Grand Duke of Tuscany, 1621-70, grandson of Ferdinand I. 247. **Aretines** the men of Arezzo.

249. **statue of his father,** the statue of Ferdinand I (1549-1609), erected in front of the cathedral in 1595. Cf. *The Statue and the Bust*, page 239. 279. **ineffable sacrosanct,** the unspeakable holy name. The Jews, out of reverence, do not pronounce the name of Jehovah; they substitute the name *Adonai*, meaning *Lord*.

When Diocletian flourished and his like.
That building of the buttress-work was done
By martyrs and confessors; let it bide,
Add not a brick, but, where you see a chink,
Stick in a sprig of ivy or root a rose
Shall make amends and beautify the pile!
We profit as you were the painfullest
O' the martyrs, and you prove yourself a match
For the cruellest confessor ever was,
If you march boldly up and take your stand
Where their blood soaks, their bones yet strew the soil,
And cry 'Take notice, I the young and free
And well-to-do i' the world, thus leave the world,
Cast in my lot thus with no gay young world
But the grand old Church; she tempts me of the two!'
Renounce the world? Nay, keep and give it us!
Let us have you, and boast of what you bring.
We want the pick o' the earth to practice with,
Not its offscouring, halt and deaf and blind
In soul and body. There's a rubble-stone
Unfit for the front o' the building, stuff to stow
In a gap behind and keep us weather-tight;
There's porphyry for the prominent place. Good lack!
Saint Paul has had enough and to spare, I trow,
Of ragged runaway Onesimus;
He wants the right-hand with the signet-ring
Of King Agrippa, now, to shake and use.
I have a heavy scholar cloistered up,
Close under lock and key, kept at his task
Of letting Fénelon know the fool he is,
In a book I promise Christendom next spring.
Why, if he covets so much meat, the clown,
As a lark's wing next Friday, or, any day,
Diversion beyond catching his own fleas,
He shall be properly swinged, I promise him.
But you, who are so quite another paste
Of a man — do you obey me? Cultivate
Assiduous that superior gift you have
Of making madrigals (who told me? Ah!);
Get done a Marinesque Adoniad straight
With a pulse o' the blood a-pricking, here and there,
That I may tell the lady, 'And he's ours!'"

So I became a priest. Those terms changed all —
I was good enough for that, nor cheated so;
I could live thus and still hold head erect.
Now you see why I may have been before
A fribble and coxcomb, yet, as priest, break word
Nowise, to make you disbelieve me now.
I need that you should know my truth. Well, then,
According to prescription did I live, —
Conformed myself, both read the breviary
And wrote the rimes, was punctual to my place
I' the Pieve, and as diligent at my post
Where beauty and fashion rule. I throve apace,
Sub-deacon, Canon, the authority
For delicate play at tarocs, and arbiter
O' the magnitude of fan-mounts; all the while
Wanting no whit the advantage of a hint
Benignant to the promising pupil — thus:
"Enough attention to the Countess now,
The young one; 'tis her mother rules the roast,
We know where, and puts in a word; go pay
Devoir tomorrow morning after Mass!
Break that rash promise to preach, Passion-week!
Has it escaped you the Archbishop grunts
And snuffles when one grieves to tell his Grace
No soul dares treat the subject of the day
Since his own masterly handling it (ha, ha!)
Five years ago — when somebody could help
And touch up an odd phrase in time of need
(He, he!) — and somebody helps you, my son!
Therefore, don't prove so indispensable
At the Pieve, sit more loose i' the seat, nor grow
A fixture by attendance morn and eve!
Arezzo's just a haven midway Rome —
Rome's the eventual harbor — make for port,
Crowd sail, crack cordage! And your cargo be
A polished presence, a genteel manner, wit
At will, and tact at every pore of you!
I sent our lump of learning, Brother Clout,
And Father Slouch, our piece of piety,
To see Rome and try suit the Cardinal.
Thither they clump-clumped, beads and book in hand,
And ever since 'tis meat for man and maid
How both flopped down, prayed blessing on bent pate
Bald many an inch beyond the tonsure's need,
Never once dreaming, the two moony dolts,

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290. **Diocletian**, emperor of Rome (284-305). He persecuted the Christians. 314. **Onesimus**, mentioned in Paul's *Epistle to Philemon*, 1:10-18. 316. **King Agrippa.** Paul, while held a prisoner by Festus, was brought before King Agrippa. The account appears in *Acts*, 25-26. 319. **Fénelon**, a French preacher, Archbishop of Cambrai (1651-1751), who adopted the doctrines of Molinos (see note on line 151). 329. **Marinesque Adoniad**, a poem in the manner of a popular poem called *L'Adone*, written by Giovanni Marino, an Italian poet (1569-1625).

342. **the Pieve**, his church. 345. **tarocs**, a kind of card game. 353. **Passion-week**, the week before Easter, in which Christ's sufferings are commemorated.

There's nothing moves his Eminence so much
As — far from all this awe at sanctitude —
Heads that wag, eyes that twinkle, modified mirth
At the closet-lectures on the Latin tongue
A lady learns so much by, we know where.
Why, body o' Bacchus, you should crave his rule
For pauses in the elegiac couplet, chasms
Permissible only to Catullus! There!
Now go to duty; brisk, break Priscian's head
By reading the day's office — there's no help.
You've Ovid in your poke to plaster that;
Amen's at the end of all. Then sup with me!"

Well, after three or four years of this life,
In prosecution of my calling, I
Found myself at the theater one night
With a brother Canon, in a mood and mind
Proper enough for the place, amused or no;
When I saw enter, stand, and seat herself
A lady, young, tall, beautiful, strange and sad.
It was as when, in our cathedral once,
As I got yawningly through matin-song,
I saw *facchini* bear a burden up,
Base it on the high-altar, break away
A board or two, and leave the thing inside
Lofty and lone; and lo, when next I looked,
There was the Rafael! I was still one stare,
When — "Nay, I'll make her give you back your gaze" —
Said Canon Conti; and at the word he tossed
A paper-twist of comfits to her lap,
And dodged and in a trice was at my back
Nodding from over my shoulder. Then she turned,
Looked our way, smiled the beautiful sad strange smile.
"Is not she fair? 'Tis my new cousin," said he.
"The fellow lurking there i' the black o' the box
Is Guido, the old scapegrace; she's his wife,
Married three years since. How his Countship sulks!
He has brought little back from Rome beside,
After the bragging, bullying. A fair face,
And — they do say — a pocketful of gold
When he can worry both her parents dead.
I don't go much there, for the chamber's cold
And the coffee pale. I got a turn at first
Paying my duty; I observed they crouched —
The two old frightened family specters — close
In a corner, each on each like mouse on mouse
I' the cat's cage. Ever since, I stay at home.
Hallo, there's Guido, the black, mean, and small,
Bends his brows on us — please to bend your own
On the shapely nether limbs of Light-skirts there
By way of a diversion! I was a fool
To fling the sweetmeats. Prudence, for God's love!
Tomorrow I'll make my peace, e'en tell some fib,
Try if I can't find means to take you there."

That night and next day did the gaze endure,
Burnt to my brain, as sunbeam through shut eyes,
And not once changed the beautiful sad strange smile.
At vespers Conti leaned beside my seat
I' the choir — part said, part sung — "*In ex-cel-sis* —
All's to no purpose; I have louted low,
But he saw you staring — *quia sub* — don't incline
To know you nearer; him we would not hold
For Hercules — the man would lick your shoe
If you and certain efficacious friends
Managed him warily — but there's the wife.
Spare her, because he beats her; as it is,
She's breaking her heart quite fast enough — *jam tu* —
So, be you rational and make amends
With little Light-skirts yonder — *in secula*
*Secu-lo-o-o-o-rum.* Ah, you rogue! Everyone knows
What great dame she makes jealous; one against one,
Play, and win both!"
Sirs, ere the week was out,
I saw and said to myself, "Light-skirts hides teeth
Would make a dog sick — the great dame shows spite
Should drive a cat mad; 'tis but poor work this —
Counting one's fingers till the sonnet's crowned.
I doubt much if Marino really be
A better bard than Dante after all.
'Tis more amusing to go pace at eve
I' the Duomo — watch the day's last gleam outside
Turn, as into a skirt of God's own robe,

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382. **Bacchus**, the god of wine. 384. **Catullus**, a Latin poet (87-47 B.C.), noted for the polish of his verse. 385. **break Priscian's head**, violate the rules of grammar. Priscian was a famous Latin grammarian of the fifth century. 387. **Ovid**, a favorite Latin poet (43 B.C.-18 A.D.), noted for his love poems and stories of pagan gods. 398. **facchini**, porters. 402. **Rafael**, Santi Raphael (1483-1520), one of the greatest of Italian painters. 420. **two . . . specters**. Pompilia's foster-parents lived for a time in Guido's home.

434. **In ex-cel-sis**, etc., in the highest . . . forever and ever. These Latin phrases are found in numerous places in the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. 438. **Hercules**, a famous hero in Greek and Roman mythology. 452-453. **I doubt . . . after all.** See line 329. 455. **the Duomo**, the cathedral.

Those lancet-windows' jeweled miracle —
Than go eat the Archbishop's ortolans,
Digest his jokes. Luckily Lent is near;
Who cares to look will find me in my stall
At the Pieve, constant to this faith at least —
Never to write a canzonet any more."

So, next week, 'twas my patron spoke abrupt,
In altered guise, "Young man, can it be true
That after all your promise of sound fruit,
You have kept away from Countess young or old
And gone play truant in church all day long?
Are you turning Molinist?" I answered quick:
"Sir, what if I turned Christian? It might be.
The fact is, I am troubled in my mind,
Beset and pressed hard by some novel thoughts.
This your Arezzo is a limited world;
There's a strange Pope — 'tis said, a priest who thinks.
Rome is the port, you say; to Rome I go.
I will live alone — one does so in a crowd —
And look into my heart a little." "Lent
Ended" — I told friends — "I shall go to Rome."

One evening I was sitting in a muse
Over the opened "Summa," darkened round
By the mid-March twilight, thinking how my life
Had shaken under me — broke short indeed
And showed the gap 'twixt what is, what should be —
And into what abysm the soul may slip,
Leave aspiration here, achievement there,
Lacking omnipotence to connect extremes —
Thinking moreover . . . oh, thinking, if you like,
How utterly dissociated was I,
A priest and celibate, from the sad strange wife
Of Guido — just as an instance to the point,
Naught more — how I had a whole store of strengths
Eating into my heart, which craved employ,
And she, perhaps, need of a finger's help —
And yet there was no way in the wide world
To stretch out mine and so relieve myself —
How when the page o' the "Summa" preached its best,
Her smile kept glowing out of it, as to mock
The silence we could break by no one word —
There came a tap without the chamber-door,
And a whisper, when I bade who tapped speak out,
And, in obedience to my summons, last
In glided a masked muffled mystery,
Laid lightly a letter on the opened book,
Then stood with folded arms and foot demure,
Pointing as if to mark the minutes' flight.

I took the letter, read to the effect
That she, I lately flung the comfits to,
Had a warm heart to give me in exchange,
And gave it — loved me and confessed it thus,
And bade me render thanks by word of mouth,
Going that night to such a side o' the house
Where the small terrace overhangs a street
Blind and deserted, not the street in front:
Her husband being away, the surly patch,
At his villa of Vittiano.

"And you?" — I asked;
"What may you be?" "Count Guido's kind of maid —
Most of us have two functions in his house.
We all hate him, the lady suffers much,
'Tis just we show compassion, furnish help,
Specially since her choice is fixed so well.
What answer may I bring to cheer the sweet
Pompilia?"

Then I took a pen and wrote:
"No more of this! That you are fair, I know;
But other thoughts now occupy my mind.
I should not thus have played the insensible
Once on a time. What made you — may one ask —
Marry your hideous husband? 'Twas a fault,
And now you taste the fruit of it. Farewell."

"There!" smiled I as she snatched it and was gone —
"There, let the jealous miscreant — Guido's self,
Whose mean soul grins through this transparent trick —
Be balked so far, defrauded of his aim!
What fund of satisfaction to the knave,
Had I kicked this his messenger downstairs,
Trussed to the middle of her impudence,
And set his heart at ease so! No, indeed!
There's the reply which he shall turn and twist
At pleasure, snuff at till his brain grow drunk,
As the bear does when he finds a scented glove
That puzzles him — a hand and yet no hand,
Of other perfume than his own foul paw!
Last month, I had doubtless chosen to play the dupe,
Accepted the mock-invitation, kept

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457. **lancet-window**, window shaped like a lance. 458. **ortolan**, a kind of bird, regarded as a table delicacy. 462. **canzonet**, a short song in one, two, or three parts. 473. **a strange Pope**, Pope Innocent XII (1691-1700). 479. **Summa**, *Summa Theologiæ* (*Summary of Theology*), a work by Thomas Aquinas (1227-74), a famous theologian and philosopher.

513. **patch**, dolt, clown. 514. **Vittiano**, a village nine miles from Arezzo on the road to Perugia.

The sham appointment, cudgel beneath cloak,
Prepared myself to pull the appointer's self
Out of the window from his hiding-place
Behind the gown of this part-messenger
Part-mistress who would personate the wife.
Such had seemed once a jest permissible;
Now, I am not i' the mood."
Back next morn brought
The messenger, a second letter in hand.
"You are cruel, Thyrsis, and Myrtilla moans
Neglected but adores you, makes request
For mercy: why is it you dare not come?
Such virtue is scarce natural to your age —
You must love someone else; I hear you do,
The Baron's daughter or the Advocate's wife,
Or both — all's one, would you make me the third —
I take the crumbs from table gratefully
Nor grudge who feasts there. 'Faith, I blush and blaze!
Yet if I break all bounds, there's reason sure.
Are you determinedly bent on Rome?
I am wretched here, a monster tortures me;
Carry me with you! Come and say you will!
Concert this very evening! Do not write!
I am ever at the window of my room
Over the terrace, at the *Ave*. Come!"

I questioned — lifting half the woman's mask
To let her smile loose. "So, you gave my line
To the merry lady?" "She kissed off the wax,
And put what paper was not kissed away
In her bosom to go burn; but merry, no!
She wept all night when evening brought no friend,
Alone, the unkind missive at her breast;
Thus Philomel, the thorn at her breast too,
Sings" . . . "Writes this second letter?" "Even so!
Then she may peep at vespers forth?" — "What risk
Do we run o' the husband?" — "Ah — no risk at all!
He is more stupid even than jealous. Ah —
That was the reason? Why, the man's away!
Beside, his bugbear is that friend of yours,
Fat little Canon Conti. He fears him;
How should he dream of you? I told you truth:
He goes to the villa at Vittiano — 'tis
The time when Spring-sap rises in the vine —
Spends the night there. And then his wife's a child;
Does he think a child outwits him? A mere child —
Yet so full-grown, a dish for any duke.
Don't quarrel longer with such cates, but come!"

I wrote, "In vain do you solicit me.
I am a priest; and you are wedded wife,
Whatever kind of brute your husband prove.
I have scruples, in short. Yet should you really show
Sign at the window . . . but nay, best be good!
My thoughts are elsewhere." — "Take her that!"
— "Again
Let the incarnate meanness, cheat and spy,
Mean to the marrow of him, make his heart
His food, anticipate hell's worm once more!
Let him watch shivering at the window — aye,
And let this hybrid, this his light-of-love
And lackey-of-lies — a sage economy —
Paid with embracings for the rank brass coin —
Let her report and make him chuckle o'er
The breakdown of my resolution now,
And lour at disappointment in good time!
— So tantalize and so enrage by turns,
Until the two fall each on the other like
Two famished spiders, as the coveted fly,
That toys long, leaves their net and them at last!"

And so the missives followed thick and fast
For a month, say — I still came at every turn
On the soft sly adder, endlong 'neath my tread.
I was met i' the street, made sign to in the church,
A slip was found i' the door-sill, scribbled word
'Twixt page and page o' the prayer-book in my place.
A crumpled thing dropped even before my feet,
Pushed through the blind, above the terrace-rail,
As I passed, by day, the very window once.
And ever from corners would be peering up
The messenger, with the selfsame demand,
"Obdurate still, no flesh but adamant?
Nothing to cure the wound, assuage the throe
O' the sweetest lamb that ever loved a bear?"
And ever my one answer in one tone —
"Go your ways, temptress! Let a priest read, pray,
Unplagued of vain talk, visions not for him!

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551. **Thyrsis, Myrtilla.** These are common names of lovers in pastoral poetry. 566. **at the Ave,** at the hour of evening prayer, when the *Ave Maria* (*Hail Mary*) is sung. 574-575. **Thus Philomel . . . Sings.** The nightingale (Philomel) was said to sing more sweetly than usual just before death.

588. **cates,** delicacies.

In the end, you'll have your will and ruin me!"

One day, a variation; thus I read:
"You have gained little by timidity.
My husband has found out my love at length,
Sees cousin Conti was the stalking-horse,
And you the game he covered, poor fat soul!
My husband is a formidable foe,
Will stick at nothing to destroy you. Stand
Prepared, or better, run till you reach Rome!
I bade you visit me, when the last place
My tyrant would have turned suspicious at,
Or cared to seek you in, was . . . why say, where?
But now all's changed; beside, the season's past
At the villa — wants the master's eye no more.
Anyhow, I beseech you, stay away
From the window! He might well be posted there."

I wrote — "You raise my courage, or call up
My curiosity, who am but man.
Tell him he owns the palace, not the street
Under — that's his and yours and mine alike.
If it should please me pad the path this eve,
Guido will have two troubles — first to get
Into a rage, and then get out again.
Be cautious, though: at the *Ave!*"
You of the court,
When I stood question here and reached this point
O' the narrative — search notes and see and say
If someone did not interpose with smile
And sneer, "And prithee why so confident
That the husband must, of all needs, not the wife,
Fabricate thus — what if the lady loved?
What if she wrote the letters?"

Learned Sir,
I told you there's a picture in our church.
Well, if a low-browed verger sidled up
Bringing me, like a blotch, on his prod's point,
A transfixed scorpion, let the reptile writhe,
And then said, "See a thing that Rafael made —
This venom issued from Madonna's mouth!"
I should reply, "Rather, the soul of you
Has issued from your body, like from like,
By way of the ordure-corner!"

But no less,
I tired of the same long black teasing lie
Obtruded thus at every turn; the pest
Was far too near the picture, anyhow:
One does Madonna service, making clowns
Remove their dung-heap from the sacristy.
"I will to the window, as he tempts," said I:
"Yes, whom the easy love has failed allure,
This new bait of adventure tempts — thinks he.
Though the imprisoned lady keeps afar,
There will they lie in ambush, heads alert,
Kith, kin, and Count mustered to bite my heel.
No mother nor brother viper of the brood
Shall scuttle off without the instructive bruise!"

So I went; crossed street and street: "The next street's turn,
I stand beneath the terrace, see, above,
The black of the ambush-window. Then, in place
Of hand's throw of soft prelude over lute,
And cough that clears way for the ditty last" —
I began to laugh already — "he will have
'Out of the hole you hide in, on to the front,
Count Guido Franceschini, show yourself!
Hear what a man thinks of a thing like you,
And after, take this foulness in your face!'"

The words lay living on my lip; I made
The one turn more — and there at the window stood,
Framed in its black square length, with lamp in hand,
Pompilia; the same great, grave, griefful air
As stands i' the dusk, on altar that I know,
Left alone with one moonbeam in her cell,
Our Lady of all the Sorrows. Ere I knelt —
Assured myself that she was flesh and blood —
She had looked one look and vanished.
I thought — "Just so;
It was herself, they have set her there to watch —
Stationed to see some wedding-band go by,
On fair pretense that she must bless the bride,
Or wait some funeral with friends wind past,
And crave peace for the corpse that claims its due.
She never dreams they used her for a snare,
And now withdraw the bait has served its turn.
Well done, the husband, who shall fare the worse!"
And on my lip again was — "Out with thee,

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658. **verger,** an official who takes care of the interior of a church building.

695. **Our Lady of all the Sorrows,** a picture of the Virgin Mary, painted with a sword in her breast to represent her griefs, as stated in *Luke,* 11:35.—"A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also." For the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin see the note on line 52, page 223.

Guido!" When all at once she reappeared;
But, this time, on the terrace overhead,
So close above me, she could almost touch
My head if she bent down; and she did bend,
While I stood still as stone, all eye, all ear.

She began — "You have sent me letters, Sir:
I have read none — I can neither read nor write;
But she you gave them to, a woman here,
One of the people in whose power I am,
Partly explained their sense, I think, to me
Obliged to listen while she inculcates
That you, a priest, can dare love me, a wife,
Desire to live or die as I shall bid
(She makes me listen if I will or no),
Because you saw my face a single time.
It cannot be she says the thing you mean;
Such wickedness were deadly to us both.
But good true love would help me now so much —
I tell myself, you may mean good and true.
You offer me, I seem to understand,
Because I am in poverty and starve,
Much money, where one piece would save my life.
The silver cup upon the altar-cloth
Is neither yours to give nor mine to take;
But I might take one bit of bread therefrom,
Since I am starving, and return the rest,
Yet do no harm: this is my very case.
I am in that strait, I may not dare abstain
From so much of assistance as would bring
The guilt of theft on neither you nor me;
But no superfluous particle of aid.
I think, if you will let me state my case,
Even had you been so fancy-fevered here,
Not your sound self, you must grow healthy now —
Care only to bestow what I can take.
That it is only you in the wide world,
Knowing me nor in thought nor word nor deed,
Who, all unprompted save by your own heart,
Came proffering assistance now—were strange
But that my whole life is so strange; as strange
It is, my husband, whom I have not wronged,
Should hate and harm me. For his own soul's sake,
Hinder the harm! But there is something more,
And that the strangest: it has got to be
Somehow for my sake too, and yet not mine
— This is a riddle — for some kind of sake
Not any clearer to myself than you,
And yet as certain as that I draw breath —
I would fain live, not die — oh no, not die!
My case is, I was dwelling happily
At Rome with those dear Comparini, called
Father and mother to me; when at once
I found I had become Count Guido's wife,
Who then, not waiting for a moment, changed
Into a fury of fire, if once he was
Merely a man. His face threw fire at mine,
He laid a hand on me that burned all peace,
All joy, all hope, and last all fear away,
Dipping the bough of life, so pleasant once,
In fire which shriveled leaf and bud alike,
Burning not only present life but past,
Which you might think was safe beyond his reach.
He reached it, though, since that beloved pair,
My father once, my mother all those years,
That loved me so, now say I dreamed a dream
And bid me wake, henceforth no child of theirs,
Never in all the time their child at all.
Do you understand? I cannot; yet so it is.
Just so I say of you that proffer help:
I cannot understand what prompts your soul,
I simply needs must see that it is so,
Only one strange and wonderful thing more.
They came here with me, those two dear ones, kept
All the old love up, till my husband, till
His people here so tortured them, they fled.
And now, is it because I grow in flesh
And spirit one with him their torturer,
That they, renouncing him, must cast off me?
If I were graced by God to have a child,
Could I one day deny God graced me so?
Then, since my husband hates me, I shall break
No law that reigns in this fell house of hate,
By using — letting have effect so much
Of hate as hides me from that whole of hate
Would take my life which I want and must have —
Just as I take from your excess of love
Enough to save my life with, all I need.
The Archbishop said to murder me were sin;
My leaving Guido were a kind of death
With no sin — more death, he must answer for.
Hear now what death to him and life to you
I wish to pay and owe. Take me to Rome!
You go to Rome, the servant makes me hear.
Take me as you would take a dog, I think,
Masterless left for strangers to maltreat;
Take me home like that — leave me in the house
Where the father and the mother are; and soon
They'll come to know and call me by my name,
Their child once more, since child I am, for all
They now forget me, which is the worst o' the dream —

And the way to end dreams is to break them, stand,
Walk, go. Then help me to stand, walk, and go!
The Governor said the strong should help the weak;
You know how weak the strongest women are.
How could I find my way there by myself?
I cannot even call out, make them hear —
Just as in dreams; I have tried and proved the fact.
I have told this story and more to good great men,
The Archbishop and the Governor; they smiled.
‘Stop your mouth, fair one!’ — presently they frowned,
‘Get you gone, disengage you from our feet!’
I went in my despair to an old priest,
Only a friar, no great man like these two,
But good, the Augustinian, people name
Romano — he confessed me two months since.
He fears God; why then needs he fear the world?
And when he questioned how it came about
That I was found in danger of a sin —
Despair of any help from providence —
‘Since, though your husband outrage you,’ said he,
‘That is a case too common, the wives die
Or live, but do not sin so deep as this’ —
Then I told — what I never will tell you —
How, worse than husband's hate, I had to bear
The love — soliciting to shame called love —
Of his brother — the young idle priest i' the house
With only the devil to meet there. ‘This is grave —
Yes, we must interfere. I counsel — write
To those who used to be your parents once,
Of dangers here, bid them convey you hence!’
‘But,’ said I, ‘when I neither read nor write?’
Then he took pity and promised ‘I will write.’
If he did so — why, they are dumb or dead;
Either they give no credit to the tale,
Or else, wrapped wholly up in their own joy
Of such escape, they care not who cries, still
I' the clutches. Anyhow, no word arrives.
All such extravagance and dreadfulness
Seems incident to dreaming, cured one way —
Wake me! The letter I received this morn
Said — if the woman spoke your very sense —
‘You would die for me.’ I can believe it now;
For now the dream gets to involve yourself.
First of all, you seemed wicked and not good,
In writing me those letters; you came in
Like a thief upon me. I this morning said
In my extremity, entreat the thief!
Try if he have in him no honest touch!
A thief might save me from a murderer.
'Twas a thief said the last kind word to Christ.
Christ took the kindness and forgave the theft;
And so did I prepare what I now say.
But now, that you stand and I see your face,
Though you have never uttered word yet — well, I know,
Here too has been dream-work, delusion too,
And that at no time, you with the eyes here,
Ever intended to do wrong by me,
Nor wrote such letters therefore. It is false,
And you are true, have been true, will be true.
To Rome then — when is it you take me there?
Each minute lost is mortal. When? — I ask.”

I answered, “It shall be when it can be.
I will go hence and do your pleasure, find
The sure and speedy means of travel, then
Come back and take you to your friends in Rome.
There wants a carriage, money, and the rest —
A day's work by tomorrow at this time.
How shall I see you and assure escape?”

She replied, “Pass, tomorrow at this hour.
If I am at the open window, well;
If I am absent, drop a handkerchief
And walk by! I shall see from where I watch,
And know that all is done. Return next eve,
And next, and so till we can meet and speak!”
“Tomorrow at this hour I pass,” said I.
She was withdrawn.

Here is another point
I bid you pause at. When I told thus far,
Someone said, subtly, “Here at least was found
Your confidence in error — you perceived
The spirit of the letters, in a sort,
Had been the lady's, if the body should be
Supplied by Guido: say, he forged them all!
Here was the unforged fact — she sent for you,
Spontaneously elected you to help,
— What men call, loved you; Guido read her mind,
Gave it expression to assure the world
The case was just as he foresaw. He wrote;
She spoke.”
Sirs, that first simile serves still —
That falsehood of a scorpion hatched, I say,

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856. **the last kind word to Christ.** See the account of the Crucifixion in *Luke*, 23:32-34. One of the thieves “said unto Jesus, ‘Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.’ And Jesus said unto him, ‘Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.’ ” 894. **that first simile.** See lines 656-665, page 306.

Nowhere i' the world but in Madonna's mouth.
Go on! Suppose, that falsehood foiled, next eve
Pictured Madonna raised her painted hand,
Fixed the face Rafael bent above the Babe,
On my face as I flung me at her feet;
Such miracle vouchsafed and manifest,
Would that prove the first lying tale was true?
Pompilia spoke, and I at once received,
Accepted my own fact, my miracle
Self-authorized and self-explained — she chose
To summon me and signify her choice.
Afterward — oh! I gave a passing glance
To a certain ugly cloud-shape, goblin-shred
Of hell-smoke hurrying past the splendid moon
Out now to tolerate no darkness more,
And saw right through the thing that tried to pass
For truth and solid, not an empty lie:
"So, he not only forged the words for her
But words for me, made letters he called mine;
What I sent, he retained, gave these in place,
All by the mistress-messenger! As I
Recognized her, at potency of truth,
So she, by the crystalline soul, knew me,
Never mistook the signs. Enough of this —
Let the wraith go to nothingness again,
Here is the orb, have only thought for her!"

"Thought?" nay, Sirs, what shall follow was not thought;
I have thought sometimes, and thought long and hard.
I have stood before, gone round a serious thing,
Tasked my whole mind to touch and clasp it close,
As I stretch forth my arm to touch this bar.
God and man, and what duty I owe both —
I dare to say I have confronted these
In thought; but no such faculty helped here.
I put forth no thought — powerless, all that night
I paced the city; it was the first spring.
By the invasion I lay passive to,
In rushed new things, the old were rapt away;
Alike abolished — the imprisonment
Of the outside air, the inside weight o' the world
That pulled me down. Death meant, to spurn the ground,
Soar to the sky — die well and you do that.
The very immolation made the bliss;
Death was the heart of life, and all the harm
My folly had crouched to avoid, now proved a veil
Hiding all gain my wisdom strove to grasp —
As if the intense center of the flame
Should turn a heaven to that devoted fly
Which hitherto, sophist alike and sage,
Saint Thomas with his sober gray goose-quill,
And sinner Plato by Cephisian reed,
Would fain, pretending just the insect's good,
Whisk off, drive back, consign to shade again.
Into another state, under new rule
I knew myself was passing swift and sure;
Whereof the initiatory pang approached,
Felicitous annoy, as bitter-sweet
As when the virgin-band, the victors chaste,
Feel at the end the earthly garments drop,
And rise with something of a rosy shame
Into immortal nakedness: so I
Lay, and let come the proper throe would thrill
Into the ecstasy and outthrob pain.

I' the gray of dawn it was I found myself
Facing the pillared front o' the Pieve — mine,
My church; it seemed to say for the first time,
"But am not I the Bride, the mystic love
O' the Lamb, who took thy plighted troth, my priest,
To fold thy warm heart on my heart of stone
And freeze thee nor unfasten any more?
This is a fleshly woman — let the free
Bestow their life-blood; thou art pulseless now!"
See! Day by day I had risen and left this church
At the signal waved me by some foolish fan,
With half a curse and half a pitying smile
For the monk I stumbled over in my haste,
Prostrate and corpse-like at the altar-foot
Intent on his *corona;* then the church
Was ready with her quip, if word conduced,
To quicken my pace nor stop for prating — "There!
Be thankful you are no such ninny, go
Rather to teach a black-eyed novice cards
Than gabble Latin and protrude that nose
Smooth to a sheep's through no brains and much faith!"
That sort of incentive! Now the church changed tone —
Now, when I found out first that life and death
Are means to an end, that passion uses both,
Indisputably mistress of the man
Whose form of worship is self-sacrifice;
Now, from the stone lungs sighed the scrannel voice,

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945. **Saint Thomas**, Saint Thomas Aquinas (see note on line 479, page 304). 946. **sinner Plato by Cephisian reed.** Plato was a famous Greek philosopher (427-347 B.C.) He was called sinner because he was a pagan. The Cephisus was a river near Athens. 963. **the Lamb**, Christ. 973. **corona**, rosary. 985. **scrannel**, weak.

"Leave that live passion, come be dead with me!"
As if, i' the fabled garden, I had gone
On great adventure, plucked in ignorance
Hedge-fruit, and feasted to satiety,
Laughing at such high fame for hips and haws,
And scorned the achievement; then come all at once
O' the prize o' the place, the thing of perfect gold,
The apple's self — and, scarce my eye on that,
Was 'ware as well o' the seven-fold dragon's watch.

Sirs, I obeyed. Obedience was too strange —
This new thing that had been struck into me
By the look o' the lady — to dare disobey
The first authoritative word. 'Twas God's.
I had been lifted to the level of her,
Could take such sounds into my sense. I said,
"We two are cognizant o' the Master now;
She it is bids me bow the head. How true,
I am a priest! I see the function here;
I thought the other way self-sacrifice:
This is the true, seals up the perfect sum.
I pay it, sit down, silently obey."

So, I went home. Dawn broke, noon broadened, I —
I sat stone-still, let time run over me.
The sun slanted into my room, had reached
The west. I opened book — Aquinas blazed
With one black name only on the white page.
I looked up, saw the sunset; vespers rang.
"She counts the minutes till I keep my word
And come say all is ready. I am a priest.
Duty to God is duty to her; I think
God, who created her, will save her too
Some new way, by one miracle the more,
Without me. Then, prayer may avail perhaps."
I went to my own place i' the Pieve, read
The office; I was back at home again
Sitting i' the dark. "Could she but know — but know
That, were there good in this distinct from God's,
Really good as it reached her, though procured
By a sin of mine — I should sin; God forgives.
She knows it is no fear withholds me — fear?
Of what? Suspense here is the terrible thing.
If she should, as she counts the minutes, come
On the fantastic notion that I fear
The world now, fear the Archbishop, fear perhaps
Count Guido, he who, having forged the lies,
May wait the work, attend the effect — I fear
The sword of Guido! Let God see to that —
Hating lies, let not her believe a lie!"

Again the morning found me. "I will work,
Tie down my foolish thoughts. Thank God so far!
I have saved her from a scandal, stopped the tongues
Had broken else into a cackle and hiss
Around the noble name. Duty is still
Wisdom; I have been wise." So the day wore.

At evening — "But, achieving victory,
I must not blink the priest's peculiar part,
Nor shrink to counsel, comfort. Priest and friend —
How do we discontinue to be friends?
I will go minister, advise her seek
Help at the source — above all, not despair.
There may be other happier help at hand.
I hope it — wherefore then neglect to say?"

There she stood — leaned there, for the second time,
Over the terrace, looked at me, then spoke:
"Why is it you have suffered me to stay
Breaking my heart two days more than was need?
Why delay help, your own heart yearns to give?
You are again here, in the selfsame mind,
I see here, steadfast in the face of you —
You grudge to do no one thing that I ask.
Why then is nothing done? You know my need.
Still, through God's pity on me, there is time
And one day more; shall I be saved or no?"
I answered — "Lady, waste no thought, no word
Even to forgive me! Care for what I care —
Only! Now follow me as I were fate!
Leave this house in the dark tomorrow night,
Just before daybreak; there's new moon this eve —
It sets, and then begins the solid black.
Descend, proceed to the Torrione, step
Over the low dilapidated wall,
Take San Clemente; there's no other gate
Unguarded at the hour. Some paces thence
An inn stands; cross to it; I shall be there."

She answered, "If I can but find the way.
But I shall find it. Go now!"

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987. **fabled garden**, the Garden of the Hesperides, where the golden apple was guarded by a dragon (line 994).

1065-1067. **Torrione . . . San Clemente**. The Torrione was a part of the wall adjacent to the San Clemente gate at the extreme north end of Arezzo.

I did go,
Took rapidly the route myself prescribed,
Stopped at Torrione, climbed the ruined place,
Proved that the gate was practicable, reached
The inn, no eye, despite the dark, could miss,
Knocked there and entered, made the host secure:
"With Caponsacchi it is ask and have;
I know my betters. Are you bound for Rome?
I get swift horse and trusty man," said he.

Then I retraced my steps, was found once more
In my own house for the last time; there lay
The broad pale opened "Summa." "Shut his book,
There's other showing! 'Twas a Thomas too
Obtained — more favored than his namesake here —
A gift, tied faith fast, foiled the tug of doubt—
Our Lady's girdle; down he saw it drop
As she ascended into heaven, they say.
He kept that safe and bade all doubt adieu.
I too have seen a lady and hold a grace."

I know not how the night passed. Morning broke;
Presently came my servant. "Sir, this eve —
Do you forget?" I started. "How forget?
What is it you know?" "With due submission, Sir,
This being last Monday in the month but one,
And a vigil, since tomorrow is Saint George,
And feast-day, and moreover day for copes,
And Canon Conti now away a month,
And Canon Crispi sour because, forsooth,
You let him sulk in stall and bear the brunt
Of the octave . . . Well, Sir, 'tis important!"
"True!
Hearken, I have to start for Rome this night.
No word, lest Crispi overboil and burst!
Provide me with a laic dress! Throw dust
I' the Canon's eye, stop his tongue's scandal so!
See there's a sword in case of accident."
I knew the knave; the knave knew me.

And thus
Through each familiar hindrance of the day
Did I make steadily for its hour and end —
Felt time's old barrier-growth of right and fit
Give way through all its twines, and let me go.
Use and wont recognized the excepted man,
Let speed the special service — and I sped
Till, at the dead between midnight and morn,
There was I at the goal, before the gate,
With a tune in the ears, low leading up to loud,
A light in the eyes, faint that would soon be flare,
Ever some spiritual witness new and new
In faster frequence, crowding solitude
To watch the way o' the warfare — till, at last,
When the ecstatic minute must bring birth,
Began a whiteness in the distance, waxed
Whiter and whiter, near grew and more near,
Till it was she; there did Pompilia come.
The white I saw shine through her was her soul's,
Certainly, for the body was one black,
Black from head down to foot. She did not speak,
Glided into the carriage — so a cloud
Gathers the moon up. "By San Spirito,
To Rome, as if the road burned underneath!
Reach Rome, then hold my head in pledge, I pay
The run and the risk to heart's content!" Just that
I said — then, in another tick of time,
Sprang, was beside her, she and I alone.

So it began, our flight through dusk to clear,
Through day and night and day again to night
Once more, and to last dreadful dawn of all.
Sirs, how should I lie quiet in my grave
Unless you suffer me wring, drop by drop,
My brain dry, make a riddance of the drench
Of minutes with a memory in each,
Recorded motion, breath or look of hers,
Which poured forth would present you one pure glass,
Mirror you plain — as God's sea, glassed in gold,
His saints — the perfect soul Pompilia? Men,
You must know that a man gets drunk with truth
Stagnant inside him! Oh, they've killed her, Sirs!
Can I be calm?
Calmly! Each incident
Proves, I maintain, that action of the flight
For the true thing it was. The first faint scratch
O' the stone will test its nature, teach its worth
To idiots who name Parian — coprolite.

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1086-1087. **Our Lady's girdle . . . heaven.** As the Virgin Mary ascended into heaven, tradition reports that her girdle, which had been loosened, fell into the hands of St. Thomas, the doubting apostle. 1095. **Saint George,** the patron saint of England. His day is April 23. 1096. **cope,** an ecclesiastical vestment. 1099. **stall,** a seat in the choir of a church, for officiating clergy. 1100. **octave,** the week after a church festival; in this instance, April 14 to 21 inclusive. 1103. **laic,** secular.

1128. **San Spirito,** a gate at the south end of Arezzo. 1143. **God's sea, glassed.** Cf. *Revelation,* 4:6.—"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." 1151. **Parian,** pure marble from Paros, a Greek island in the Ægean Sea. **coprolite,** a piece of petrified dung.

After all, I shall give no glare — at best
Only display you certain scattered lights
Lamping the rush and roll of the abyss;
Nothing but here and there a fire-point pricks
Wavelet from wavelet. Well!
For the first hour
We both were silent in the night, I know;
Sometimes I did not see nor understand.
Blackness engulfed me—partial stupor, say—
Then I would break way, breathe through the surprise,
And be aware again, and see who sat
In the dark vest with the white face and hands.
I said to myself — "I have caught it, I conceive
The mind o' the mystery; 'tis the way they wake
And wait, two martyrs somewhere in a tomb,
Each by each as their blessing was to die;
Some signal they are promised and expect —
When to arise before the trumpet scares:
So, through the whole course of the world they wait
The last day, but so fearless and so safe!
No otherwise, in safety and not fear,
I lie, because she lies too by my side."
You know this is not love, Sirs — it is faith,
The feeling that there's God, he reigns and rules
Out of this low world — that is all; no harm!
At time she drew a soft sigh — music seemed
Always to hover just above her lips,
Not settle — break a silence music too.

In the determined morning, I first found
Her head erect, her face turned full to me,
Her soul intent on mine through two wide eyes.
I answered them. "You are saved hitherto.
We have passed Perugia — gone round by the wood,
Not through, I seem to think — and opposite
I know Assisi; this is holy ground."
Then she resumed. "How long since we both left
Arezzo?" — "Years — and certain hours beside."
It was at . . . ah, but I forget the names!
'Tis a mere post-house and a hovel or two;
I left the carriage and got bread and wine
And brought it her. — "Does it detain to eat?"
"— They stay perforce, change horses — therefore eat!
We lose no minute; we arrive, be sure!"
This was — I know not where — there's a great hill
Close over, and the stream has lost its bridge;
One fords it. She began — "I have heard say
Of some sick body that my mother knew,
'Twas no good sign when in a limb diseased
All the pain suddenly departs — as if
The guardian angel discontinued pain
Because the hope of cure was gone at last;
The limb will not again exert itself,
It needs be pained no longer: so with me —
My soul whence all the pain is past at once;
All pain must be to work some good in the end.
True, this I feel now, this may be that good,
Pain was because of — otherwise, I fear!"

She said — a long while later in the day,
When I had let the silence be — abrupt —
"Have you a mother?" "She died, I was born."
"A sister then?" "No sister." "Who was it —
What woman were you used to serve this way,
Be kind to, till I called you and you came?"
I did not like that word. Soon afterward —
"Tell me, are men unhappy, in some kind
Of mere unhappiness at being men,
As women suffer, being womanish?
Have you, now, some unhappiness, I mean,
Born of what may be man's strength overmuch,
To match the undue susceptibility,
The sense at every pore when hate is close?
It hurts us if a baby hides its face
Or child strikes at us punily, calls names
Or makes a mouth — much more if stranger men
Laugh or frown — just as that were much to bear!
Yet rocks split — and the blow-ball does no more,
Quivers to feathery nothing at a touch;
And strength may have its drawback, weakness 'scapes."

Once she asked, "What is it that made you smile,
At the great gate with the eagles and the snakes,
Where the company entered, 'tis a long time since?"
"— Forgive — I think you would not understand.
Ah, but you ask me — therefore, it was this:
That was a certain bishop's villa-gate
(I knew it by the eagles), and at once
Remember this same bishop was just he

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1183. **Perugia**, a city about forty miles from Arezzo, on the road to Rome. 1185. **holy ground**, holy because St. Francis was born there in 1182. He was the founder of the Order of Franciscan monks and of the monastery of St. Francis.

1226. **blow-ball**, the flower of the dandelion.

People of old were wont to bid me please
If I would catch preferment; so, I smiled
Because an impulse came to me, a whim —
What if I prayed the prelate leave to speak,
Began upon him in his presence-hall
— 'What, still at work so gray and obsolete?
Still rocheted and mitered more or less?
Don't you feel all that out of fashion now?
I find out when the day of things is done!' "

At eve we heard the *angelus;* she turned —
"I told you I can neither read nor write.
My life stopped with the play-time; I will learn,
If I begin to live again; but you —
Who are a priest — wherefore do you not read
The service at this hour? Read Gabriel's song,
The lesson, and then read the little prayer
To Raphael, proper for us travelers!"
I did not like that, neither, but I read.

When we stopped at Foligno it was dark.
The people of the post came out with lights.
The driver said, "This time tomorrow, may
Saints only help, relays continue good,
Nor robbers hinder, we arrive at Rome."
I urged — "Why tax your strength a second night?
Trust me, alight here and take brief repose!
We are out of harm's reach, past pursuit; go sleep
If but an hour! I keep watch, guard the while
Here in the doorway." But her whole face changed —
The misery grew again about her mouth;
The eyes burned up from faintness, like the fawn's
Tired to death in the thicket, when she feels
The probing spear o' the huntsman. "Oh, no stay!"
She cried, in the fawn's cry, "On to Rome, on, on —
Unless 'tis you who fear — which cannot be!"

We did go on all night; but at its close
She was troubled, restless, moaned low, talked at whiles
To herself, her brow on quiver with the dream.
Once, wide awake, she menaced, at arms' length
Waved away something — "Never again with you!
My soul is mine, my body is my soul's;
You and I are divided evermore
In soul and body. Get you gone!" Then I —
"Why, in my whole life I have never prayed!
Oh, if the God, that only can, would help!
Am I his priest with power to cast out fiends?
Let God arise and all his enemies
Be scattered!" By morn, there was peace, no sigh
Out of the deep sleep.

When she woke at last,
I answered the first look — "Scarce twelve hours more,
Then, Rome! There probably was no pursuit,
There cannot now be peril; bear up brave!
Just some twelve hours to press through to the prize;
Then, no more of the terrible journey!"
"Then,
No more o' the journey; if it might but last!
Always, my life long, thus to journey still!
It is the interruption that I dread —
With no dread, ever to be here and thus!
Never to see a face nor hear a voice!
Yours is no voice; you speak when you are dumb;
Nor face — I see it in the dark. I want
No face nor voice that change and grow unkind."
That I liked; that was the best thing she said.

In the broad day, I dared entreat, "Descend!"
I told a woman, at the garden-gate
By the post-house, white and pleasant in the sun,
"It is my sister — talk with her apart!
She is married and unhappy, you perceive;
I take her home because her head is hurt;
Comfort her as you women understand!"
So, there I left them by the garden-wall,
Paced the road, then bade put the horses to,
Came back, and there she sat. Close to her knee,
A black-eyed child still held the bowl of milk,
Wondered to see how little she could drink,
And in her arms the woman's infant lay.
She smiled at me, "How much good this has done!
This is a whole night's rest and how much more!
I can proceed now, though I wish to stay.
How do you call that tree with the thick top
That holds in all its leafy green and gold
The sun now like an immense egg of fire?"

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1243. **rocheted and mitered.** The rochet is a close-fitting linen vestment resembling the surplice. The miter is the official headdress of a bishop. 1246. **the angelus,** a prayer spoken at the sound of the bell at morning, noon, and night. It consists of Gabriel's salutation (line 1251) to Mary—*Ave Maria* (*Hail Mary*), etc. 1251. **Gabriel's song,** a hymn in the Roman Catholic breviary for the feast of St. Gabriel, the Archangel. 1252-1253. **prayer To Raphael,** a prayer in the Roman Catholic breviary for the feast of St. Raphael, an angel mentioned in the apocryphal book of Tobit. He is represented as a traveler. 1255. **Foligno,** a small town about twenty miles from Perugia, and ten from Assisi.

(It was a million-leaved mimosa.) "Take
The babe away from me and let me go!"
And in the carriage, "Still a day, my friend!
And perhaps half a night, the woman fears.
I pray it finish, since it cannot last.
There may be more misfortune at the close,
And where will you be? God suffice me then!"
And presently — for there was a roadside-shrine —
"When I was taken first to my own church,
Lorenzo in Lucina, being a girl,
And bid confess my faults, I interposed,
'But teach me what fault to confess and know!'
So, the priest said — 'You should bethink yourself;
Each human being needs must have done wrong!'
Now, be you candid and no priest but friend —
Were I surprised and killed here on the spot,
A runaway from husband and his home,
Do you account it were in sin I died?
My husband used to seem to harm me, not —
Not on pretense he punished sin of mine,
Nor for sin's sake and lust of cruelty,
But as I heard him bid a farming-man
At the villa take a lamb once to the wood
And there ill-treat it, meaning that the wolf
Should hear its cries, and so come, quick be caught,
Enticed to the trap. He practiced thus with me
That so, whatever were his gain thereby,
Others than I might become prey and spoil.
Had it been only between our two selves —
His pleasure and my pain — why, pleasure him
By dying, nor such need to make a coil!
But this was worth an effort, that my pain
Should not become a snare, prove pain threefold
To other people — strangers — or unborn —
How should I know? I sought release from that —
I think, or else from — dare I say, some cause
Such as is put into a tree, which turns
Away from the north wind with what nest it holds —
The woman said that trees so turn. Now, friend,
Tell me — because I cannot trust myself!
You are a man — what have I done amiss?"
You must conceive my answer — I forget —
Taken up wholly with the thought, perhaps,
This time she might have said — might, did not say —
"You are a priest." She said "my friend."
Day wore,
We passed the places, somehow the calm went,
Again the restless eyes began to rove
In new fear of the foe mine could not see.
She wandered in her mind — addressed me once
"Gaetano!" — that is not my name; whose name?
I grew alarmed, my head seemed turning too.
I quickened pace with promise now, now threat;
Bade drive and drive, nor any stopping more.
"Too deep i' the thick of the struggle, struggle through!
Then drench her in repose though death's self pour
The plenitude of quiet — help us, God,
Whom the winds carry!"

Suddenly I saw
The old tower, and the little white-walled clump
Of buildings and the cypress-tree or two —
"Already Castelnuovo — Rome!" I cried,
"As good as Rome — Rome is the next stage, think!
This is where travelers' hearts are wont to beat.
Say you are saved, sweet lady!" Up she woke.
The sky was fierce with color from the sun
Setting. She screamed out, "No, I must not die!
Take me no farther, I should die; stay here!
I have more life to save than mine!"
She swooned.
We seemed safe; what was it foreboded so?
Out of the coach into the inn I bore
The motionless and breathless pure and pale
Pompilia — bore her through a pitying group
And laid her on a couch, still calm and cured
By deep sleep of all woes at once. The host
Was urgent, "Let her stay an hour or two!
Leave her to us, all will be right by morn!"
Oh, my foreboding! But I could not choose.
I paced the passage, kept watch all night long,
I listened — not one movement, not one sigh.
"Fear not; she sleeps so sound!" they said. But I
Feared, all the same, kept fearing more and more,
Found myself throb with fear from head to foot,
Filled with a sense of such impending woe
That, at first pause of night, pretense of gray,

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1327. **Lorenzo in Lucina**, the Church of San Lorenzo-in-Lucina, in Rome. 1348. **coil**, fuss, confusion.

1367. **Gaetano**. This was the name of Pompilia's son; he was named after St. Gaetan (1480-1547), founder of the Order of Theatins. (See *Pompilia*, 99 ff., page 324.) 1377. **Castelnuovo**, a village about fifteen miles from Rome.

I made my mind up it was morn. — "Reach Rome,
Lest hell reach her! A dozen miles to make,
Another long breath, and we emerge!" I stood
I' the courtyard, roused the sleepy grooms. "Have out
Carriage and horse, give haste, take gold!" said I.
While they made ready in the doubtful morn —
'Twas the last minute — needs must I ascend
And break her sleep; I turned to go.
And there
Faced me Count Guido, there posed the mean man
As master — took the field, encamped his rights,
Challenged the world; there leered new triumph, there
Scowled the old malice in the visage bad
And black o' the scamp. Soon triumph suppled the tongue
A little, malice glued to his dry throat,
And he part howled, part hissed . . . oh, how he kept
Well out o' the way, at arm's length and to spare! —
"My salutation to your priestship! What?
Matutinal, busy with book so soon
Of an April day that's damp as tears that now
Deluge Arezzo at its darling's flight? —
'Tis unfair, wrongs feminity at large,
To let a single dame monopolize
A heart the whole sex claims, should share alike.
Therefore I overtake you, Canon! Come!
The lady — could you leave her side so soon?
You have not yet experienced at her hands
My treatment; you lay down undrugged, I see!
Hence this alertness — hence no death-in-life
Like what held arms fast when she stole from mine.
To be sure, you took the solace and repose
That first night at Foligno! — news abound
O' the road by this time — men regaled me much,
As past them I came halting after you,
Vulcan pursuing Mars, as poets sing —
Still at the last here pant I, but arrive,
Vulcan — and not without my Cyclops too,
The Commissary and the unpoisoned arm
O' the Civil Force, should Mars turn mutineer.
Enough of fooling; capture the culprits, friend!
Here is the lover in the smart disguise
With the sword — he is a priest, so mine lies still.
There upstairs hides my wife the runaway,
His leman; the two plotted, poisoned first,
Plundered me after, and eloped thus far
Where now you find them. Do your duty quick!
Arrest and hold him! That's done; now catch her!"
During this speech of that man — well, I stood
Away, as he managed; still, I stood as near
The throat of him — with these two hands, my own —
As now I stand near yours, Sir — one quick spring,
One great good satisfying gripe, and lo!
There had he lain abolished with his lie,
Creation purged o' the miscreate, man redeemed,
A spittle wiped off from the face of God!
I, in some measure, seek a poor excuse
For what I left undone, in just this fact
That my first feeling at the speech I quote
Was — not of what a blasphemy was dared,
Not what a bag of venomed purulence
Was split and noisome — but how splendidly
Mirthful, how ludicrous a lie was launched!
Would Molière's self wish more than hear such man
Call, claim such woman for his own, his wife,
Even though, in due amazement at the boast,
He had stammered, she moreover was divine?
She to be his — were hardly less absurd
Than that he took her name into his mouth,
Licked, and then let it go again, the beast,
Signed with his slaver. Oh, she poisoned him,
Plundered him, and the rest! Well, what I wished
Was, that he would but go on, say once more
So to the world, and get his meed of men,
The fist's reply to the filth. And while I mused,
The minute, oh, the misery, was gone!
On either idle hand of me there stood
Really an officer, nor laughed i' the least;
Nay, rendered justice to his reason, laid
Logic to heart, as 'twere submitted them
"Twice two makes four."
"And now, catch her!" he cried.
That sobered me. "Let myself lead the way —
Ere you arrest me, who am somebody,
Being, as you hear, a priest and privileged —
To the lady's chamber! I presume you — men

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1418. **Matutinal,** early. 1434. **Vulcan . . . Mars.** Vulcan was the blacksmith of the gods and the consort of Venus, goddess of love. He objected to the love of Venus for Mars, god of war. The story is told in the *Odyssey*. 1436. **Cyclops,** a race of giants said to have assisted in the workshop of Vulcan under Mt. Etna.

1459. **purulence,** pus, matter. 1462. **Molière,** the great French dramatist of the 17th century. Lines 1462-64 refer to his play *Don Juan*, in which the libertine husband claims Donna Elvire, the nun, as his wife.

Expert, instructed how to find out truth,
Familiar with the guise of guilt. Detect
Guilt on her face when it meets mine, then judge
Between us and the mad dog howling there!"
Up we all went together; in they broke
O' the chamber late my chapel. There she lay,
Composed as when I laid her, that last eve,
O' the couch, still breathless, motionless, sleep's self,
Wax-white, seraphic, saturate with the sun
O' the morning that now flooded from the front
And filled the window with a light like blood.
"Behold the poisoner, the adulteress —
And feigning sleep too! Seize, bind!" Guido hissed.

She started up, stood erect, face to face
With the husband; back he fell, was buttressed there
By the window all aflame with morning-red,
He the black figure, the opprobrious blur
Against all peace and joy and light and life.
"Away from between me and hell!" she cried;
"Hell for me, no embracing any more!
I am God's, I love God, God — whose knees I clasp,
Whose utterly most just award I take,
But bear no more love-making devils; hence!"
I may have made an effort to reach her side
From where I stood i' the doorway — anyhow
I found the arms, I wanted, pinioned fast,
Was powerless in the clutch to left and right
O' the rabble pouring in, rascality
Enlisted, rampant on the side of hearth,
Home and the husband — pay in prospect too!
They heaped themselves upon me. "Ha! — and him
Also you outrage? Him, too, my sole friend,
Guardian, and savior? That I balk you of,
Since — see how God can help at last and worst!"
She sprang at the sword that hung beside him, seized,
Drew, brandished it (the sunrise burned for joy
O' the blade), "Die," cried she, "devil, in God's name!"
Ah, but they all closed round her, twelve to one —
The unmanly men, no woman-mother made,
Spawned somehow! Dead-white and disarmed she lay.
No matter for the sword, her word sufficed
To spike the coward through and through; he shook,
Could only spit between the teeth — "You see?
You hear? Bear witness, then! Write down . . . but no —
Carry these criminals to the prison-house,
For first thing! I begin my search meanwhile
After the stolen effects, gold, jewels, plate,
Money and clothes, they robbed me of and fled,
With no few amorous pieces, verse and prose,
I have much reason to expect to find."

When I saw that — no more than the first mad speech,
Made out the speaker mad and a laughing-stock,
So neither did this next device explode
One listener's indignation — that a scribe
Did sit down; set himself to write indeed,
While sundry knaves began to peer and pry
In corner and hole — that Guido, wiping brow
And getting him a countenance, was fast
Losing his fear, beginning to strut free
O' the stage of his exploit, snuff here, sniff there —
Then I took truth in, guessed sufficiently
The service for the moment. "What I say,
Slight at your peril! We are aliens here,
My adversary and I, called noble both;
I am the nobler, and a name men know.
I could refer our cause to our own court
In our own country, but prefer appeal
To the nearer jurisdiction. Being a priest,
Though in a secular garb — for reasons good
I shall adduce in due time to my peers —
I demand that the Church I serve, decide
Between us, right the slandered lady there.
A Tuscan noble, I might claim the Duke;
A priest, I rather choose the Church — bid Rome
Cover the wronged with her inviolate shield."

There was no refusing this; they bore me off,
They bore her off, to separate cells o' the same
Ignoble prison, and, separate, thence to Rome.
Pompilia's face, then and thus, looked on me
The last time in this life — not one sight since,
Never another sight to be! And yet
I thought I had saved her, I appealed to Rome;
It seems I simply sent her to her death.
You tell me she is dying now, or dead;
I cannot bring myself to quite believe
This is a place you torture people in.
What if this your intelligence were just
A subtlety, an honest wile to work
On a man at unawares? 'Twere worthy you.
No, Sirs, I cannot have the lady dead!

That erect form, flashing brow, fulgurant eye,
That voice immortal (oh, that voice of hers!),
That vision in the blood-red daybreak — that
Leap to life of the pale electric sword
Angels go armed with — that was not the last
O' the lady! Come, I see through it, you find —
Know the maneuver! Also herself said
I had saved her; do you dare say she spoke false?
Let me see for myself if it be so!
Though she were dying, a priest might be of use,
The more when he's a friend too — she called me
Far beyond "friend." Come, let me see her — indeed
It is my duty, being a priest; I hope
I stand confessed, established, proved a priest?
My punishment had motive that, a priest
I, in a laic garb, a mundane mode,
Did what were harmlessly done otherwise.
I never touched her with my finger-tip
Except to carry her to the couch, that eve,
Against my heart, beneath my head, bowed low,
As we priests carry the paten; that is why
— To get leave and go see her of your grace —
I have told you this whole story over again.
Do I deserve grace? For I might lock lips,
Laugh at your jurisdiction; what have you
To do with me in the matter? I suppose
You hardly think I donned a bravo's dress
To have a hand in the new crime; on the old,
Judgment's delivered, penalty imposed,
I was chained fast at Civita hand and foot —
She had only you to trust to, you and Rome,
Rome and the Church, and no pert meddling priest
Two days ago, when Guido, with the right,
Hacked her to pieces. One might well be wroth;
I have been patient, done my best to help.
I come from Civita and punishment
As friend of the court — and for pure friendship's sake
Have told my tale to the end — nay, not the end —
For, wait — I'll end — not leave you that excuse!

When we were parted — shall I go on there?
I was presently brought to Rome — yes, here I stood
Opposite yonder very crucifix —
And there sat you and you, Sirs, quite the same.
I heard charge, and bore question, and told tale
Noted down in the book there — turn and see
If, by one jot or tittle, I vary now!
I' the color the tale takes, there's change perhaps;
'Tis natural, since the sky is different,
Eclipse in the air now; still, the outline stays.
I showed you how it came to be my part
To save the lady. Then your clerk produced
Papers, a pack of stupid and impure
Banalities called letters about love —
Love, indeed — I could teach who styled them so,
Better, I think, though priest and loveless both!
"— How was it that a wife, young, innocent,
And stranger to your person, wrote this page?" —
"— She wrote it when the Holy Father wrote
The bestiality that posts through Rome,
Put in his mouth by Pasquin." "Nor perhaps
Did you return these answers, verse and prose,
Signed, sealed and sent the lady? There's your hand!"
"— This precious piece of verse, I really judge,
Is meant to copy my own character,
A clumsy mimic; and this other prose,
Not so much even; both rank forgery.
Verse, quotha? Bembo's verse! When Saint John wrote
The tract '*De Tribius*,' I wrote this to match."
"— How came it, then, the documents were found
At the inn on your departure?" — "I opine,
Because there were no documents to find
In my presence — you must hide before you find.
Who forged them hardly practiced in my view;
Who found them waited till I turned my back."
"— And what of the clandestine visits paid,
Nocturnal passage in and out the house
With its lord absent? 'Tis alleged you climbed" . . .
"— Flew on a broomstick to the man i' the moon!
Who witnessed or will testify this trash?"

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1574. **fulgurant**, bright, flashing. 1594. **paten**, the plate on which the sacred bread of the communion service is carried.

1633. **Pasquin**, the Roman Pasquino, an imaginary person to whom anonymous lampoons were ascribed. The name was popularly given to a statue discovered in 1501 near the shop of a man named Pasquino. Satires and lampoons were frequently fastened to the statue, which had been set up in Rome. 1637. **character**, handwriting. 1640. **Bembo**, Cardinal Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), of Venice. He was a great scholar and an elegant writer of both prose and verse. The reference is ironical. 1641. **De Tribius**, the title of a blasphemous and legendary pamphlet entitled *De Tribius Impostoribus* (*The Three Impostors*). It referred to Moses, Christ, and Mahomet.

"—The trusty servant, Margherita's self,
Even she who brought you letters, you confess,
And, you confess, took letters in reply;
Forget not we have knowledge of the facts!"
"—Sirs, who have knowledge of the facts, defray
The expenditure of wit I waste in vain,
Trying to find out just one fact of all!
She who brought letters from who could not write,
And took back letters to who could not read—
Who was that messenger, of your charity?"
"—Well, so far favors you the circumstance
That this same messenger . . . how shall we say? . . .
*Sub imputatione meretricis*
*Laborat*—which makes accusation null;
We waive this woman's.—Naught makes void the next.
Borsi, called Venerino, he who drove,
O' the first night when you fled away, at length
Deposes to your kissings in the coach,
—Frequent, frenetic" . . . "When deposed he so?"
"After some weeks of sharp imprisonment" . . .
"Granted by friend the Governor, I engage"—
"—For his participation in your flight!
At length his obduracy melting made
The avowal mentioned" . . . "Was dismissed forthwith
To liberty, poor knave, for recompense.
Sirs, give what credit to the lie you can!
For me, no word in my defense I speak,
And God shall argue for the lady!"
So
Did I stand question, and make answer, still
With the same result of smiling disbelief,
Polite impossibility of faith
In such affected virtue in a priest;
But a showing fair play, an indulgence, even,
To one no worse than others after all—
Who had not brought disgrace to the order, played
Discreetly, ruffled gown nor ripped the cloth
In a bungling game at romps; I have told you, Sirs—
If I pretended simply to be pure,
Honest, and Christian in the case—absurd!
As well go boast myself above the needs
O' the human nature, careless how meat smells,
Wine tastes—a saint above the smack! But once
Abate my crest, own flaws i' the flesh, agree
To go with the herd, be hog no more nor less,
Why, hogs in common herd have common rights;
I must not be unduly borne upon,
Who just romanced a little, sowed wild oats,
But 'scaped without a scandal, flagrant fault.
My name helped to a mirthful circumstance:
"Joseph" would do well to amend his plea;
Undoubtedly—some toying with the wife,
But as for ruffian violence and rape,
Potiphar pressed too much on the other side!
The intrigue, the elopement, the disguise—well charged!
The letters and verse looked hardly like the truth.
Your apprehension was—of guilt enough
To be compatible with innocence,
So, punished best a little and not too much.
Had I struck Guido Franceschini's face,
You had counseled me withdraw for my own sake,
Balk him of bravo-hiring. Friends came round,
Congratulated, "Nobody mistakes!
The pettiness o' the forfeiture defines
The peccadillo: Guido gets his share;
His wife is free of husband and hook-nose,
The moldy viands and the mother-in-law.
To Civita with you and amuse the time,
Travesty us '*De Raptu Helenæ!*'
A funny figure must the husband cut
When the wife makes him skip—too ticklish, eh?
Do it in Latin, not the Vulgar, then!
Scazons—we'll copy and send his Eminence.
Mind—one iambus in the final foot!
He'll rectify it, be your friend for life!"
Oh, Sirs, depend on me for much new light
Thrown on the justice and religion here
By this proceeding, much fresh food for thought!

And I was just set down to study these
In relegation, two short days ago,
Admiring how you read the rules, when, clap,
A thunder comes into my solitude—
I am caught up in a whirlwind and cast here,
Told of a sudden, in this room where so late
You dealt out law adroitly, that those scales,

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1665-1666. **Sub . . . Laborat,** labors under the imputation of unchastity. 1671. **frenetic,** uncontrolled, passionate. 1694. **above the smack,** superior to the sense of taste.

1702-1705. **Joseph . . . Potiphar.** The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife is told in *Genesis*, 39. As the result of her false report, Joseph was imprisoned. 1716. **peccadillo,** fault. 1720. **De Raptu Helenæ,** *Of the Carrying off of Helen* (of Troy); the title of a Greek poem by Coluthus (c. 500 A.D.). It is a bad imitation of Homer. 1723. **Vulgar,** common Italian. 1724. **Scazon,** a line of verse consisting of six feet; five are iambic and one (the last) is trochaic. Caponsacchi is told to write an imperfect line, with an iambus for the trochee so that the Cardinal may detect it, thus proving his acumen.

I meekly bowed to, took my allotment from,
Guido has snatched at, broken in your hands,
Metes to himself the murder of his wife,
Full measure, pressed down, running over now!
Can I assist to an explanation? — Yes,
I rise in your esteem, sagacious Sirs,
Stand up a renderer of reasons, not
The officious priest would personate Saint George
For a mock Princess in undragoned days.
What, the blood startles you? What, after all
The priest who needs must carry sword on thigh
May find imperative use for it? Then, there was
A Princess, was a dragon belching flame,
And should have been a Saint George also? Then,
There might be worse schemes than to break the bonds
At Arezzo, lead her by the little hand,
Till she reached Rome, and let her try to live?
But you were law and gospel — would one please
Stand back, allow your faculty elbow-room?
You blind guides who must needs lead eyes that see!
Fools, alike ignorant of man and God!
What was there here should have perplexed your wit
For a wink of the owl-eyes of you? How miss, then,
What's now forced on you by this flare of fact —
As if Saint Peter failed to recognize
Nero as no apostle, John or James,
Till some one burned a martyr, made a torch
O' the blood and fat to show his features by!
Could you fail read this cartulary aright
On head and front of Franceschini there —
Large-lettered like hell's masterpiece of print —
That he, from the beginning pricked at heart
By some lust, letch of hate against his wife,
Plotted to plague her into overt sin
And shame, would slay Pompilia body and soul,
And save his mean self — miserably caught
I' the quagmire of his own tricks, cheats, and lies?
— That himself wrote those papers — from himself
To himself — which, i' the name of me and her,
His mistress-messenger gave her and me,
Touching us with such pustules of the soul
That she and I might take the taint, be shown
To the world and shuddered over, speckled so?
— That the agent put her sense into my words,
Made substitution of the thing she hoped,
For the thing she had and held, its opposite,
While the husband in the background bit his lips
At each fresh failure of his precious plot?
— That when at the last we did rush each on each,
By no chance but because God willed it so —
The spark of truth was struck from out our souls —
Made all of me, descried in the first glance,
Seem fair and honest and permissible love
O' the good and true — as the first glance told me
There was no duty patent in the world
Like daring try be good and true myself,
Leaving the shows of things to the Lord of Show
And Prince o' the Power of the Air. Our very flight,
Even to its most ambiguous circumstance,
Irrefragably proved how futile, false . . .
Why, men — men and not boys — boys and not babes —
Babes and not beasts — beasts and not stocks and stones! —
Had the liar's lie been true one pin-point speck,
Were I the accepted suitor, free o' the place,
Disposer of the time, to come at a call
And go at a wink as who should say me nay —
What need of flight, what were the gain therefrom
But just damnation, failure, or success?
Damnation pure and simple to her the wife
And me the priest — who bartered private bliss
For public reprobation, the safe shade
For the sunshine which men see to pelt me by;
What other advantage — we who led the days
And nights alone i' the house — was flight to find?
In our whole journey did we stop an hour,
Diverge a foot from straight road till we reached
Or would have reached — but for that fate of ours —
The father and mother, in the eye of Rome,

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1740. **Full measure . . . running over.** From *Luke*, 6:38.—"Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." 1744-1745. **Saint George . . . Princess.** Saint George, the patron saint of England, according to tradition killed a dragon in Lybia and rescued the princess Sabra. 1762. **Nero,** a profligate and tyrannical Roman emperor (54-68 A.D.) He persecuted the Christians. 1765. **cartulary,** a register. 1769. **letch,** passion.

1794. **Prince . . . Air,** a designation of Satan in *Ephesians*, 2:2.

The eye of yourselves we made aware of us
At the first fall of misfortune? And indeed
You did so far give sanction to our flight,
Confirm its purpose, as lend helping hand,
Deliver up Pompilia not to him
She fled, but those the flight was ventured for.
Why then could you, who stopped short, not go on
One poor step more, and justify the means,
Having allowed the end? — not see and say,
"Here's the exceptional conduct that should claim
To be exceptionally judged on rules
Which, understood, make no exception here"
— Why play instead into the devil's hands
By dealing so ambiguously as gave
Guido the power to intervene like me,
Prove one exception more? I saved his wife
Against law; against law he slays her now —
Deal with him!

I have done with being judged.
I stand here guiltless in thought, word, and deed,
To the point that I apprise you — in contempt
For all misapprehending ignorance
O' the human heart, much more the mind of Christ —
That I assuredly did bow, was blessed
By the revelation of Pompilia. There!
Such is the final fact I fling you, Sirs,
To mouth and mumble and misinterpret; there!
"The priest's in love," have it the vulgar way!
Unpriest me, rend the rags o' the vestment, do —
Degrade deep, disenfranchise all you dare —
Remove me from the midst, no longer priest
And fit companion for the like of you —
Your gay Abati with the well-turned leg
And rose i' the hat-rim, Canons, cross at neck
And silk mask in the pocket of the gown,
Brisk bishops with the world's musk still unbrushed
From the rochet; I'll no more of these good things.
There's a crack somewhere, something that's unsound
I' the rattle!

For Pompilia — be advised,
Build churches, go pray! You will find me there,
I know, if you come — and you will come, I know.
Why, there's a Judge weeping! Did not I say
You were good and true at bottom? You see the truth —
I am glad I helped you; she helped me just so.

But for Count Guido — you must counsel there!
I bow my head, bend to the very dust,
Break myself up in shame of faultiness.
I had him one whole moment, as I said —
As I remember, as will never out
O' the thoughts of me — I had him in arm's reach
There — as you stand, Sir, now you cease to sit —
I could have killed him ere he killed his wife,
And did not; he went off alive and well
And then effected this last feat — through me!
Me — not through you — dismiss that fear! 'Twas you
Hindered me staying here to save her — not
From leaving you and going back to him
And doing service in Arezzo. Come,
Instruct me in procedure! I conceive —
In all due self-abasement might I speak —
How you will deal with Guido. Oh, not death!
Death, if it let her life be; otherwise
Not death — your lights will teach you clearer! I
Certainly have an instinct of my own
I' the matter; bear with me and weigh its worth!
Let us go away — leave Guido all alone
Back on the world again that knows him now!
I think he will be found (indulge so far!)
Not to die so much as slide out of life,
Pushed by the general horror and common hate
Low, lower — left o' the very ledge of things,
I seem to see him catch convulsively
One by one at all honest forms of life,
At reason, order, decency, and use —
To cramp him and get foothold by at least;
And still they disengage them from his clutch.
"What, you are he, then, had Pompilia once
And so forwent her? Take not up with us!"
And thus I see him slowly and surely edged
Off all the table-land whence life upsprings
Aspiring to be immortality,
As the snake, hatched on hill-top by mischance,
Despite his wriggling, slips, slides, slidders down
Hillside, lies low and prostrate on the smooth
Level of the outer place, lapsed in the vale.

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1846. **Abati**, a name applied to any person wearing ecclesiastical garb. 1850. **rochet.** See note on line 1243, page 313.

1891. **forwent her**, gave her up.

So I lose Guido in the loneliness,
Silence, and dusk, till at the dole end,
At the horizontal line, creation's verge,
From what just is to absolute nothingness —
Whom is it, straining onward still, he meets?
What other man deep further in the fate,
Who, turning at the prize of a footfall
To flatter him and promise fellowship,
Discovers in the act a frightful face —
Judas, made monstrous by much solitude!
The two are at one now! Let them love their love
That bites and claws like hate, or hate their hate
That mops and mows and makes as it were love!
There, let them each tear each in devil's-fun,
Or fondle this the other while malice aches —
Both teach, both learn detestability!
Kiss him the kiss, Iscariot! Pay that back,
That smatch o' the slaver blistering on your lip,
By the better trick, the insult he spared Christ —
Lure him the lure o' the letters, Aretine!
Lick him o'er slimy-smooth with jelly-filth
O' the verse-and-prose pollution in love's guise!
The cockatrice is with the basilisk!
There let them grapple, denizens o' the dark,
Foes or friends, but indissolubly bound,
In their one spot out of the ken of God
Or care of man, forever and evermore!

Why, Sirs, what's this? Why, this is sorry and strange!
Futility, divagation; this from me
Bound to be rational, justify an act
Of sober man! — whereas, being moved so much,
I give you cause to doubt the lady's mind:
A pretty sarcasm for the world! I fear
You do her wit injustice — all through me!
Like my fate all through — ineffective help!
A poor rash advocate I prove myself.
You might be angry with good cause; but sure
At the advocate — only at the undue zeal
That spoils the force of his own plea, I think?
My part was just to tell you how things stand,
State facts and not be flustered at their fume.
But then 'tis a priest speaks; as for love — no!
If you let buzz a vulgar fly like that
About your brains, as if I loved, forsooth,
Indeed, Sirs, you do wrong! We had no thought
Of such infatuation, she and I.
There are many points that prove it; do be just!
I told you — at one little roadside-place
I spent a good half-hour, paced to and fro
The garden; just to leave her free awhile,
I plucked a handful of spring herb and bloom.
I might have sat beside her on the bench
Where the children were. I wish the thing had been,
Indeed; the event could not be worse, you know —
One more half-hour of her saved! She's dead now, Sirs!
While I was running on at such a rate,
Friends should have plucked me by the sleeve; I went
Too much o' the trivial outside of her face
And the purity that shone there — plain to me,
Not to you — what more natural? Nor am I
Infatuated — oh, I saw, be sure!
Her brow had not the right line — leaned too much,
Painters would say — they like the straight-up Greek;
This seemed bent somewhat with an invisible crown
Of martyr and saint, not such as art approves.
And how the dark orbs dwelt deep underneath,
Looked out of such a sad sweet heaven on me!
The lips, compressed a little, came forward too,
Careful for a whole world of sin and pain.
That was the face, her husband makes his plea,
He sought just to disfigure — no offense
Beyond that! Sirs, let us be rational!
He needs must vindicate his honor — aye,
Yet shirks, the coward, in a clown's disguise,
Away from the scene, endeavors to escape.
Now, had he done so, slain and left no trace
O' the slayer — what were vindicated, pray?
You had found his wife disfigured or a corpse,
For what and by whom? It is too palpable!
Then, here's another point involving law:
I use this argument to show you meant
No calumny against us by that title
O' the sentence — liars try to twist it so;
What penalty it bore, I had to pay
Till further proof should follow of innocence—
*Probationis ob defectum* — proof?
How could you get proof without trying us?
You went through the preliminary form,

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1917. **the better trick**, i.e., spitting upon him, a common form of insult. 1918. **Aretine**, man of Arezzo (addressed to Guido). 1921. **cockatrice, basilisk.** These were both fabulous monsters supposed to kill with a look. 1927. **divagation**, digression.

1984. **Probationis ob defectum**, for want of sufficient proof.

Stopped there, contrived this sentence to amuse
The adversary. If the title ran
For more than fault imputed and not proved,
That was a simple penman's error, else
A slip i' the phrase — as when we say of you
"Charged with injustice" — which may either be
Or not be — 'tis a name that sticks meanwhile.
Another relevant matter (fool that I am!
Not what I wish true, yet a point friends urge;
It is not true — yet, since friends think it helps):
She only tried me when some others failed —
Began with Conti, whom I told you of,
And Guillichini, Guido's kinsfolk both,
And when abandoned by them, not before,
Turned to me. That's conclusive why she turned.
Much good they got by the happy cowardice!
Conti is dead, poisoned a month ago;
Does that much strike you as a sin? Not much,
After the present murder — one mark more
On the Moor's skin — what is black by blacker still?
Conti had come here and told truth. And so
With Guillichini; he's condemned of course
To the galleys, as a friend in this affair,
Tried and condemned for no one thing i' the world,
A fortnight since by who but the Governor?
The just judge, who refused Pompilia help
At first blush, being her husband's friend, you know.
There are two tales to suit the separate courts,
Arezzo and Rome: he tells you here, we fled
Alone, unhelped — lays stress on the main fault,
The spiritual sin, Rome looks to; but elsewhere
He likes best we should break in, steal, bear off,
Be fit to brand and pillory and flog —
That's the charge goes to the heart of the Governor.
If these unpriest me, you and I may yet
Converse, Vincenzo Marzi-Medici!
Oh, Sirs, there are worse men than you, I say!
More easily duped, I mean; this stupid lie,
Its liar never dared propound in Rome,
He gets Arezzo to receive — nay more,
Gets Florence and the Duke to authorize!
This is their Rota's sentence, their Granduke
Signs and seals! Rome for me henceforward — Rome,
Where better men are — most of all, that man
The Augustinian of the Hospital,
Who writes the letter — he confessed, he says,
Many a dying person, never one
So sweet and true and pure and beautiful.
A good man! Will you make him Pope one day?
Not that he is not good too, this we have —
But old — else he would have his word to speak,
His truth to teach the world. I thirst for truth,
But shall not drink it till I reach the source.

Sirs, I am quiet again. You see, we are
So very pitiable, she and I,
Who had conceivably been otherwise.
Forget distemperature and idle heat!
Apart from truth's sake, what's to move so much?
Pompilia will be presently with God;
I am, on earth, as good as out of it,
A relegated priest; when exile ends,
I mean to do my duty and live long.
She and I are mere strangers now; but priests
Should study passion — how else cure mankind,
Who come for help in passionate extremes?
I do but play with an imagined life
Of who, unfettered by a vow, unblessed
By the higher call — since you will have it so —
Leads it companioned by the woman there.
To live, and see her learn, and learn by her,
Out of the low obscure and petty world —
Or only see one purpose and one will
Evolve themselves i' the world, change wrong to right;
To have to do with nothing but the true,
The good, the eternal — and these, not alone
In the main current of the general life,
But small experiences of every day,
Concerns of the particular hearth and home;
To learn not only by a comet's rush
But a rose's birth — not by the grandeur, God —
But the comfort, Christ. All this, how far away!

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1988. **The adversary,** Guido. One of Browning's sources states that the judges sent Caponsacchi to prison to give "the Franceschini brothers satisfaction in their pressing solicitations rather than because of the claims of justice." 2006. **the Moor's skin,** a reference to Othello the Moor, in Shakespeare's *Othello,* who killed his wife Desdemona on a charge of infidelity that later was shown to be false. 2022. **Vincenzo Marzi-Medici,** the governor of Arezzo, before whom the first trial was held.

2028. **Rota's sentence.** The Rota is an ecclesiastical court that hears appeals. 2031. **The Augustinian . . . Hospital,** Frà Celestino Angelo di Sant Anna, the Augustinian monk who received the confession of Pompilia. The letter is his deposition, given in a pamphlet describing the case. This came into Browning's possession in London just before he began writing the poem.

Mere delectation, meet for a minute's dream! —
Just as a drudging student trims his lamp,
Opens his Plutarch, puts him in the place
Of Roman, Grecian; draws the patched gown close,
Dreams, "Thus should I fight, save or rule the world!" —
Then smilingly, contentedly, awakes
To the old solitary nothingness.
So I, from such communion, pass content . . .

O great, just, good God! Miserable me!

## BOOK VII

## POMPILIA

I am just seventeen years and five months old,
And, if I lived one day more, three full weeks;
'Tis writ so in the church's register,
Lorenzo in Lucina, all my names
At length, so many names for one poor child—
Francesca Camilla Vittoria Angela
Pompilia Comparini — laughable!
Also 'tis writ that I was married there
Four years ago; and they will add, I hope,
When they insert my death, a word or two —
Omitting all about the mode of death —
This, in its place, this which one cares to know —
That I had been a mother of a son
Exactly two weeks. It will be through grace
O' the Curate, not through any claim I have;
Because the boy was born at, so baptized
Close to, the Villa, in the proper church —
A pretty church, I say no word against,
Yet stranger-like — while this Lorenzo seems
My own particular place, I always say.
I used to wonder, when I stood scarce high
As the bed here, what the marble lion meant,
With half his body rushing from the wall,
Eating the figure of a prostrate man
(To the right, it is, of entry by the door) —
An ominous sign to one baptized like me,
Married, and to be buried there, I hope.
And they should add, to have my life complete,
He is a boy and Gaetan by name —
Gaetano, for a reason — if the friar
Don Celestine will ask this grace for me
Of Curate Ottoboni. He it was
Baptized me; he remembers my whole life
As I do his gray hair.

All these few things
I know are true — will you remember them?
Because time flies. The surgeon cared for me,
To count my wounds — twenty-two dagger-wounds,
Five deadly, but I do not suffer much —
Or too much pain — and am to die tonight.

Oh, how good God is that my babe was born —
Better than born, baptized and hid away
Before this happend, safe from being hurt!
That had been sin God could not well forgive;
He was too young to smile and save himself.
When they took, two days after he was born,
My babe away from me to be baptized
And hidden awhile, for fear his foe should find —
The country-woman, used to nursing babes,
Said, "Why take on so? where is the great loss?
These next three weeks he will but sleep and feed,
Only begin to smile at the month's end;
He would not know you, if you kept him here,
Sooner than that; so, spend three merry weeks
Snug in the Villa, getting strong and stout,
And then I bring him back to be your own,
And both of you may steal to — we know where!"
The month — there wants of it two weeks this day!
Still, I half fancied when I heard the knock
At the Villa in the dusk, it might prove she —
Come to say, "Since he smiles before the time,
Why should I cheat you out of one good hour?
Back I have brought him; speak to him and judge!"
Now I shall never see him; what is worse,
When he grows up and gets to be my age,
He will seem hardly more than a great boy;
And if he asks, "What was my mother like?"
People may answer, "Like girls of seventeen" —
And how can he but think of this and that,
Lucias, Marias, Sofias, who titter or blush
When he regards them as such boys may do?
Therefore I wish someone will please to say
I looked already old though I was young;
Do I not — say, if you are by to speak —

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2070. **Plutarch.** Plutarch was a Greek biographer and moralist of the first century. His chief work contains the lives of Greek and Roman heroes.

*Pompilia.* In this Book Pompilia tells the story of her life as she lies dying in the hospital, where she was taken after being attacked by Guido and left for dead. The date is January 6, 1698.

4. **Lorenzo in Lucina,** the Church of San Lorenzo-in-Lucina, in Rome. 22-24. **marble lion . . . man.** A lion preying upon a man symbolized the severity of the church toward impenitents or disbelievers. 30. **for a reason.** See lines 99-102.

31. **Don Celestine,** the monk who heard Pompilia's confession.

Look nearer twenty? No more like, at least,
Girls who look arch or redden when boys laugh,
Than the poor Virgin that I used to know
At our street-corner in a lonely niche —
The babe, that sat upon her knees, broke off —
Thin white glazed clay, you pitied her the more.
She, not the gay ones, always got my rose.

How happy those are who know how to write!
Such could write what their son should read in time,
Had they a whole day to live out like me.
Also my name is not a common name,
"Pompilia," and may help to keep apart
A little the thing I am from what girls are.
But then how far away, how hard to find
Will anything about me have become,
Even if the boy bethink himself and ask!
No father that ever knew at all,
Nor ever had — no, never had, I say!
That is the truth — nor any mother left,
Out of the little two weeks that she lived,
Fit for such memory as might assist;
As good too as no family, no name,
Not even poor old Pietro's name, nor hers,
Poor kind unwise Violante, since it seems
They must not be my parents any more.
That is why something put it in my head
To call the boy "Gaetano" — no old name
For sorrow's sake; I looked up to the sky
And took a new saint to begin anew.
One who has only been made saint — how long?
Twenty-five years; so, carefuller, perhaps,
To guard a namesake than those old saints grow,
Tired out by this time — see my own five saints!

On second thoughts, I hope he will regard
The history of me as what some one dreamed,
And get to disbelieve it at the last;
Since to myself it dwindles fast to that,
Sheer dreaming and impossibility —
Just in four days too! All the seventeen years,
Not once did a suspicion visit me
How very different a lot is mine
From any other woman's in the world.
The reason must be, 'twas by step and step
It got to grow so terrible and strange.
These strange woes stole on tiptoe, as it were,
Into my neighborhood and privacy,
Sat down where I sat, laid them where I lay;
And I was found familiarized with fear,
When friends broke in, held up a torch and cried,
"Why, you Pompilia in the cavern thus,
How comes that arm of yours about a wolf?
And the soft length — lies in and out your feet
And laps you round the knee — a snake it is!"
And so on.

Well, and they are right enough,
By the torch they hold up now; for first, observe,
I never had a father — no, nor yet
A mother; my own boy can say at least,
"I had a mother whom I kept two weeks!"
Not I, who little used to doubt . . . *I* doubt
Good Pietro, kind Violante, gave me birth?
They loved me always as I love my babe
(Nearly so, that is — quite so could not be),
Did for me all I meant to do for him,
Till one surprising day, three years ago,
They both declared, at Rome, before some judge
In some court where the people flocked to hear,
That really I had never been their child,
Was a mere castaway, the careless crime
Of an unknown man, the crime and care too much
Of a woman known too well — little to these,
Therefore, of whom I was the flesh and blood;
What then to Pietro and Violante, both
No more my relatives than you or you?
Nothing to them! You know what they declared.

So with my husband — just such a surprise,
Such a mistake, in that relationship!
Everyone says that husbands love their wives,
Guard them and guide them, give them happiness;
'Tis duty, law, pleasure, religion. Well,
You see how much of this comes true in mine!
People indeed would fain have somehow proved
He was no husband; but he did not hear,
Or would not wait, and so has killed us all.
Then there is . . . only let me name one more!
There is the friend — men will not ask about,
But tell untruths of, and give nicknames to,
And think my lover, most surprise of all!
Do only hear, it is the priest they mean,
Giuseppe Caponsacchi: a priest — love,
And love me! Well, yet people think he did.
I am married, he has taken priestly vows,
They know that, and yet go on, say, the same,
"Yes, how he loves you!" "That was love" — they say,

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102. **a new saint**, St. Gaetan (1480-1547), who was canonized by Pope Clement X in 1671. 106. **my own five saints.** She had five names (see lines 6-7).

155. **He . . . husband.** Pompilia brought suit for divorce, but it was never given a hearing.

When anything is answered that they ask;
Or else "No wonder you love him" — they say.
Then they shake heads, pity much, scarcely blame —
As if we neither of us lacked excuse,
And anyhow are punished to the full,
And downright love atones for everything!
Nay, I heard read out in the public court
Before the judge, in presence of my friends,
Letters 'twas said the priest had sent to me,
And other letters sent him by myself,
We being lovers!

Listen what this is like!
When I was a mere child, my mother . . . that's
Violante, you must let me call her so,
Nor waste time, trying to unlearn the word . . .
She brought a neighbor's child of my own age
To play with me of rainy afternoons;
And, since there hung a tapestry on the wall,
We two agreed to find each other out
Among the figures. "Tisbe, that is you,
With half-moon on your hair-knot, spear in hand,
Flying, but no wings, only the great scarf
Blown to a bluish rainbow at your back;
Call off your hound and leave the stag alone!"
"— And there are you, Pompilia, such green leaves
Flourishing out of your five finger-ends,
And all the rest of you so brown and rough;
Why is it you are turned a sort of tree?"
You know the figures never were ourselves,
Though we nicknamed them so. Thus, all my life —
As well what was, as what, like this, was not —
Looks old, fantastic, and impossible;
I touch a fairy thing that fades and fades.
— Even to my babe! I thought, when he was born,
Something began for once that would not end,
Nor change into a laugh at me, but stay
Forevermore, eternally quite mine.
Well, so he is — but yet they bore him off,
The third day, lest my husband should lay traps
And catch him, and by means of him catch me.
Since they have saved him so, it was well done;
Yet thence comes such confusion of what was
With what will be — that late seems long ago,
And, what years should bring round, already come,
Till even he withdraws into a dream
As the rest do. I fancy him grown great,
Strong, stern, a tall young man who tutors me,
Frowns with the others, "Poor imprudent child!
Why did you venture out of the safe street?
Why go so far from help to that lone house?
Why open at the whisper and the knock?"

Six days ago when it was New Year's day,
We bent above the fire and talked of him,
What he should do when he was grown and great.
Violante, Pietro, each had given the arm
I leant on, to walk by, from couch to chair
And fireside — laughed, as I lay safe at last,
"Pompilia's march from bed to board is made,
Pompilia back again and with a babe,
Shall one day lend his arm and help her walk!"
Then we all wished each other more New Years.
Pietro began to scheme — "Our cause is gained;
The law is stronger than a wicked man —
Let him henceforth go his way, leave us ours!
We will avoid the city, tempt no more
The greedy ones by feasting and parade —
Live at the other villa, we know where,
Still farther off, and we can watch the babe
Grow fast in the good air; and wood is cheap
And wine sincere outside the city gate.
I still have two or three old friends will grope
Their way along the mere half-mile of road,
With staff and lantern on a moonless night
When one needs talk; they'll find me, never fear,
And I'll find them a flask of the old sort yet!"
Violante said, "You chatter like a crow;
Pompilia tires o' the tattle, and shall to bed.
Do not too much the first day — somewhat more
Tomorrow, and, the next, begin the cape
And hood and coat! I have spun wool enough."
Oh, what a happy friendly eve was that!

And, next day, about noon, out Pietro went —
He was so happy and would talk so much,
Until Violante pushed and laughed him forth
Sight-seeing in the cold — "So much to see
I' the churches! Swathe your throat three times!" she cried,

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189. **Call . . . alone.** This refers to a figure of Diana, goddess of the chase. 193. **you . . . tree,** a figure of Daphne, a beautiful nymph pursued by Apollo and changed into a laurel tree.

235. **sincere,** pure, unadulterated.

"And, above all, beware the slippery ways,
And bring us all the news by supper-time!"
He came back late, laid by cloak, staff, and hat,
Powdered so thick with snow it made us laugh;
Rolled a great log upon the ash o' the hearth,
And bade Violante treat us to a flask,
Because he had obeyed her faithfully,
Gone sight-see through the seven, and found no church
To his mind like San Giovanni — "There's the fold,
And all the sheep together, big as cats!
And such a shepherd, half the size of life,
Starts up and hears the angel" — when, at the door,
A tap. We started up; you know the rest.

Pietro at least had done no harm, I know;
Nor even Violante, so much harm as makes
Such revenge lawful. Certainly she erred —
Did wrong, how shall I dare say otherwise? —
In telling that first falsehood, buying me
From my poor faulty mother at a price,
To pass off upon Pietro as his child.
If one should take my babe, give him a name,
Say he was not Gaetano and my own,
But that some other woman made his mouth
And hands and feet — how very false were that!
No good could come of that; and all harm did.
Yet if a stranger were to represent,
"Needs must you either give your babe to me
And let me call him mine forevermore,
Or let your husband get him" — ah, my God,
That were a trial I refuse to face!
Well, just so here; it proved wrong but seemed right
To poor Violante — for there lay, she said,
My poor real dying mother in her rags,
Who put me from her with the life and all,
Poverty, pain, shame, and disease at once,
To die the easier by what price I fetched —
Also (I hope) because I should be spared
Sorrow and sin — why may not that have helped?
My father — he was no one, anyone —
The worse, the likelier — call him — he who came,
Was wicked for his pleasure, went his way,
And left no trace to track by; there remained
Nothing but me, the unnecessary life,
To catch up or let fall — and yet a thing
She could make happy, be made happy with,
This poor Violante — who would frown thereat?
Well, God, you see! God plants us where we grow.
It is not that, because a bud is born
At a wild brier's end, full i' the wild beast's way,
We ought to pluck and put it out of reach
On the oak-tree top — say, "There the bud belongs!"
She thought, moreover, real lies were lies told
For harm's sake; whereas this had good at heart,
Good for my mother, good for me, and good
For Pietro who was meant to love a babe,
And needed one to make his life of use,
Receive his house and land when he should die.
Wrong, wrong, and always wrong! how plainly wrong!
For see, this fault kept pricking, as faults do,
All the same at her heart. This falsehood hatched;
She could not let it go nor keep it fast.
She told me so — the first time I was found
Locked in her arms once more after the pain,
When the nuns let me leave them and go home,
And both of us cried all the cares away —
This it was set her on to make amends,
This brought about the marriage — simply this!
Do let me speak for her you blame so much!
When Paul, my husband's brother, found me out,
Heard there was wealth for who should marry me,
So, came and made a speech to ask my hand
For Guido — she, instead of piercing straight
Through the pretense to the ignoble truth,
Fancied she saw God's very finger point,
Designate just the time for planting me
(The wild-brier slip she plucked to love and wear)
In soil where I could strike real root, and grow,
And get to be the thing I called myself;
For, wife and husband are one flesh, God says,
And I, whose parents seemed such and were none,
Should in a husband have a husband now,
Find nothing, this time, but was what it seemed —
All truth and no confusion any more.
I know she meant all good to me, all pain
To herself — since how could it be aught but pain
To give me up, so, from her very breast,
The wilding flower-tree-branch that, all those years,

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259. **the seven**, the seven hills of Rome.

330. **God says**, in *Genesis*, 2:24, and in *Mark*, 10:8.

She had got used to feel for and find fixed?
She meant well; has it been so ill i' the main?
That is but fair to ask; one cannot judge
Of what has been the ill or well of life,
The day that one is dying — sorrows change
Into not altogether sorrow-like.
I do see strangeness but scarce misery,
Now it is over, and no danger more.
My child is safe; there seems not so much pain.
It comes, most like, that I am just absolved,
Purged of the past, the foul in me, washed fair —
One cannot both have and not have, you know —
Being right now, I am happy and color things.
Yes, everybody that leaves life sees all
Softened and bettered; so with other sights.
To me at least was never evening yet
But seemed far beautifuller than its day,
For past is past.

There was a fancy came,
When somewhere, in the journey with my friend,
We stepped into a hovel to get food;
And there began a yelp here, a bark there —
Misunderstanding creatures that were wroth
And vexed themselves and us till we retired.
The hovel is life; no matter what dogs bit
Or cat scratched in the hovel I break from,
All outside is lone field, moon and such peace —
Flowing in, filling up as with a sea
Whereon comes Someone, walks fast on the white,
Jesus Christ's self, Don Celestine declares,
To meet me and calm all things back again.

Beside, up to my marriage, thirteen years
Were, each day, happy as the day was long;
This may have made the change too terrible.
I know that when Violante told me first
The cavalier — she meant to bring next morn,
Whom I must also let take, kiss my hand —
Would be at San Lorenzo the same eve
And marry me — which over, we should go
Home both of us without him as before,
And, till she bade speak, I must hold my tongue,
Such being the correct way with girl-brides,
From whom one word would make a father blush —
I know, I say, that when she told me this —
Well, I no more saw sense in what she said
Than a lamb does in people clipping wool;
Only lay down and let myself be clipped.
And when next day the cavalier who came
(Tisbe had told me that the slim young man
With wings at head, and wings at feet, and sword
Threatening a monster, in our tapestry,
Would eat a girl else — was a cavalier) —
When he proved Guido Franceschini — old
And nothing like so tall as I myself,
Hook-nosed and yellow in a bush of beard,
Much like a thing I saw on a boy's wrist,
He called an owl and used for catching birds —
And when he took my hand and made a smile —
Why, the uncomfortableness of it all
Seemed hardly more important in the case
Than — when one gives you, say, a coin to spend —
Its newness or its oldness; if the piece
Weigh properly and buy you what you wish,
No matter whether you get grime or glare!
Men take the coin, return you grapes and figs.
Here, marriage was the coin, a dirty piece
Would purchase me the praise of those I loved;
About what else should I concern myself?

So, hardly knowing what a husband meant,
I supposed this or any man would serve,
No whit the worse for being so uncouth;
For I was ill once and a doctor came
With a great ugly hat, no plume thereto,
Black jerkin and black buckles and black sword,
And white sharp beard over the ruff in front,
And, oh, so lean, so sour-faced and austere! —
Who felt my pulse, made me put out my tongue,
Then oped a phial, dripped a drop or two
Of a black bitter something — I was cured!
What mattered the fierce beard or the grim face?
It was the physic beautified the man,
Master Malpichi — never met his match
In Rome, they said — so ugly all the same!

However, I was hurried through a storm,
Next dark eve of December's deadest day —
How it rained! — through our street and the Lion's-mouth
And the bit of Corso — cloaked round, covered close,
I was like something strange or contraband —
Into blank San Lorenzo, up the aisle,

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386-388. **young man . . . monster,** a reference to Perseus, the hero in Greek mythology who rescued Andromeda, the daughter of the king of Ethiopia, from a sea-monster. 419. **Master Malpichi,** probably Marcello Malpighi (1628-94), a famous physician of Bologna. He became physician to Pope Innocent XII in Rome in 1691. 423. **the Lion's-mouth,** the name of a street in Rome, Via della Bocca di Leone. 424. **Corso,** the principal thoroughfare of Rome.

My mother keeping hold of me so tight,
I fancied we were come to see a corpse
Before the altar which she pulled me toward.
There we found waiting an unpleasant priest,
Who proved the brother, not our parish friend,
But one with mischief-making mouth and eye,
Paul, whom I know since to my cost. And then
I heard the heavy church-door lock out help
Behind us; for the customary warmth,
Two tapers shivered on the altar. "Quick —
Lose no time!" cried the priest. And straightway down
From . . . what's behind the altar where he hid —
Hawk-nose and yellowness and bush and all,
Stepped Guido, caught my hand, and there was I
O' the chancel, and the priest had opened book,
Read here and there, made me say that and this,
And after, told me I was now a wife,
Honored indeed, since Christ thus weds the Church,
And therefore turned he water into wine,
To show I should obey my spouse like Christ.
Then the two slipped aside and talked apart,
And I, silent and scared, got down again
And joined my mother, who was weeping now.
Nobody seemed to mind us any more,
And both of us on tiptoe found our way
To the door which was unlocked by this, and wide.
When we were in the street, the rain had stopped;
All things looked better. At our own house-door,
Violante whispered, "No one syllable
To Pietro! Girl-brides never breathe a word!"
"— Well treated to a wetting, draggle-tails!"
Laughed Pietro as he opened — "Very near
You made me brave the gutter's roaring sea
To carry off from roost old dove and young,
Trussed up in church, the cote, by me, the kite!
What do these priests mean, praying folk to death
On stormy afternoons, with Christmas close
To wash our sins off nor require the rain?"
Violante gave my hand a timely squeeze;
Madonna saved me from immodest speech.
I kissed him and was quiet, being a bride.

When I saw nothing more, the next three weeks,
Of Guido — "Nor the Church sees Christ," thought I.
"Nothing is changed, however; wine is wine
And water only water in our house.
Nor did I see that ugly doctor since
That cure of the illness; just as I was cured,
I am married — neither scarecrow will return."

Three weeks, I chuckled — "How would Giulia stare,
And Tecla smile and Tisbe laugh outright,
Were it not impudent for brides to talk!" —
Until one morning, as I sat and sang
At the broidery-frame alone i' the chamber — loud
Voices, two, three together, sobbings too,
And my name, "Guido," "Paolo," flung like stones
From each to the other! In I ran to see.
There stood the very Guido and the priest
With sly face — formal but nowise afraid —
While Pietro seemed all red and angry, scarce
Able to stutter out his wrath in words;
And this it was that made my mother sob,
As he reproached her — "You have murdered us,
Me and yourself and this our child beside!"
Then Guido interposed, "Murdered or not,
Be it enough your child is now my wife!
I claim and come to take her." Paul put in,
"Consider — kinsman, dare I term you so?
What is the good of your sagacity
Except to counsel in a strait like this?
I guarantee the parties man and wife
Whether you like or loathe it, bless or ban.
May spilt milk be put back within the bowl —
The done thing, undone? You, it is, we look
For counsel to, you fitliest will advise!
Since milk, though spilt and spoilt, does marble good,
Better we down on knees and scrub the floor,
Than sigh, 'the waste would make a syllabub!'
Help us so turn disaster to account,
So predispose the groom, he needs shall grace
The bride with favor from the very first,
Not begin marriage an embittered man!"
He smiled — the game so wholly in his hands!
While fast and faster sobbed Violante — "Aye,
All of us murdered, past averting now!
O my sin, O my secret!" and such like.

Then I began to half surmise the truth;
Something had happened, low, mean, underhand,
False, and my mother was to blame, and I

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445. **turned . . . wine.** This took place at the marriage feast in Cana in Galilee; told in *John*, 2:1-10.

503. **syllabub,** a dish made by mixing wine with milk.

To pity, whom all spoke of, none addressed.
I was the chattel that had caused a crime.
I stood mute — those who tangled must untie
The embroilment. Pietro cried, "Withdraw, my child!
She is not helpful to the sacrifice
At this stage — do you want the victim by
While you discuss the value of her blood?
For her sake, I consent to hear you talk;
Go, child, and pray God help the innocent!"

I did go and was praying God, when came
Violante, with eyes swollen and red enough,
But movement on her mouth for make-believe
Matters were somehow getting right again.
She bade me sit down by her side and hear.
"You are too young and cannot understand,
Nor did your father understand at first.
I wished to benefit all three of us,
And when he failed to take my meaning — why,
I tried to have my way at unaware —
Obtained him the advantage he refused.
As if I put before him wholesome food
Instead of broken victual — he finds change
I' the viands, never cares to reason why,
But falls to blaming me, would fling the plate
From window, scandalize the neighborhood,
Even while he smacks his lips — men's way, my child!
But either you have prayed him unperverse
Or I have talked him back into his wits;
And Paolo was a help in time of need —
Guido, not much — my child, the way of men!
A priest is more a woman than a man,
And Paul did wonders to persuade. In short,
Yes, he was wrong, your father sees and says;
My scheme was worth attempting, and bears fruit —
Gives you a husband and a noble name,
A palace and no end of pleasant things.
What do you care about a handsome youth?
They are so volatile, and tease their wives!
This is the kind of man to keep the house.
We lose no daughter — gain a son, that's all;
For 'tis arranged we never separate,
Nor miss, in our gray time of life, the tints
Of you that color eve to match with morn.
In good or ill, we share and share alike,
And cast our lots into a common lap,
And all three die together as we lived!
Only, at Arezzo — that's a Tuscan town,
Not so large as this noisy Rome, no doubt,
But older far and finer much, say folk —
In a great palace where you will be queen,
Know the Archbishop and the Governor,
And we see homage done you ere we die.
Therefore, be good and pardon!" — "Pardon what?
You know things, I am very ignorant;
All is right if you only will not cry!"

And so an end! Because a blank begins
From when, at the word, she kissed me hard and hot,
And took me back to where my father leaned
Opposite Guido — who stood eying him,
As eyes the butcher the cast panting ox
That feels his fate is come, nor struggles more —
While Paul looked archly on, pricked brow at whiles
With the pen-point as to punish triumph there —
And said, "Count Guido, take your lawful wife
Until death part you!"

All since is one blank,
Over and ended; a terrific dream.
It is the good of dreams — so soon they go!
Wake in a horror of heart-beats, you may —
Cry, "The dread thing will never from my thoughts!"
Still, a few daylight doses of plain life,
Cock-crow and sparrow-chirp, or bleat and bell
Of goats that trot by, tinkling, to be milked;
And when you rub your eyes awake and wide,
Where is the harm o' the horror? Gone! So here.
I know I wake — but from what? Blank, I say!
This is the note of evil; for good lasts.
Even when Don Celestine bade, "Search and find!
For your soul's sake, remember what is past,
The better to forgive it" — all in vain!
What was fast getting indistinct before,
Vanished outright. By special grace perhaps,
Between that first calm and this last, four years
Vanish — one quarter of my life, you know.
I am held up, amid the nothingness,
By one or two truths only — thence I hang,
And there I live — the rest is death or dream,
All but those points of my support. I think
Of what I saw at Rome once in the Square
O' the Spaniards, opposite the Spanish House:
There was a foreigner had trained a goat,
A shuddering white woman of a beast,
To climb up, stand straight on a pile of sticks
Put close, which gave the creature room enough;

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602-603. **the Square O' the Spaniards,** Piazza di Spagna, the center of what was the strangers' quarter in Rome. 603. **the Spanish House,** the palace of the Spanish ambassador.

When she was settled there, he, one by one,
Took away all the sticks, left just the four
Whereon the little hoofs did really rest;
There she kept firm; all underneath was air.
So, what I hold by, are my prayer to God,
My hope, that came in answer to the prayer,
Some hand would interpose and save me — hand
Which proved to be my friend's hand; and — blest bliss —
That fancy which began so faint at first,
That thrill of dawn's suffusion through my dark,
Which I perceive was promise of my child,
The light his unborn face sent long before —
God's way of breaking the good news to flesh.
That is all left now of those four bad years.
Don Celestine urged, "But remember more!
Other men's faults may help me find your own.
I need the cruelty exposed, explained,
Or how can I advise you to forgive?"
He thought I could not properly forgive
Unless I ceased forgetting — which is true;
For, bringing back reluctantly to mind
My husband's treatment of me — by a light
That's later than my lifetime, I review
And comprehend much and imagine more,
And have but little to forgive at last.
For now — be fair and say — is it not true
He was ill-used and cheated of his hope
To get enriched by marriage? Marriage gave
Me and no money, broke the compact so.
He had a right to ask me on those terms,
As Pietro and Violante to declare
They would not give me; so the bargain stood.
They broke it, and he felt himself aggrieved,
Became unkind with me to punish them.
They said 'twas he began deception first,
Nor, in one point whereto he pledged himself,
Kept promise; what of that, suppose it were?
Echoes die off, scarcely reverberate
Forever — why should ill keep echoing ill,
And never let our ears have done with noise?
Then my poor parents took the violent way
To thwart him — he must needs retaliate — wrong,
Wrong, and all wrong — better say, all blind!
As I myself was, that is sure, who else
Had understood the mystery; for his wife
Was bound in some sort to help somehow there.
It seems as if I might have interposed,
Blunted the edge of their resentment so,
Since he vexed me because they first vexed him;
"I will entreat them to desist, submit,
Give him the money and be poor in peace —
Certainly not go tell the world; perhaps
He will grow quiet with his gains."

Yes, say
Something to this effect and you do well!
But then you have to see first; I was blind.
That is the fruit of all such wormy ways,
The indirect, the unapproved of God —
You cannot find their author's end and aim,
Not even to substitute your good for bad,
Your straight for the irregular; you stand
Stupefied, profitless, as cow or sheep
That miss a man's mind; anger him just twice
By trial at repairing the first fault.
Thus, when he blamed me, "You are a coquette,
A lure-owl posturing to attract birds;
You look love-lures at theater and church,
In walk, at window!" — that, I knew, was false.
But why he charged me falsely, whither sought
To drive me by such charge — how could I know?
So, unaware, I only made things worse.
I tried to soothe him by abjuring walk,
Window, church, theater, for good and all,
As if he had been in earnest; that, you know,
Was nothing like the object of his charge.
Yes, when I got my maid to supplicate
The priest, whose name she read when she would read
Those feigned false letters I was forced to hear
Though I could read no word of — he should cease
Writing — nay, if he minded prayer of mine,
Cease from so much as even pass the street
Whereon our house looked — in my ignorance
I was just thwarting Guido's true intent;
Which was, to bring about a wicked change
Of sport to earnest, tempt a thoughtless man
To write indeed, and pass the house, and more,
Till both of us were taken in a crime.
He ought not to have wished me thus act lies,
Simulate folly; but — wrong or right, the wish —
I failed to apprehend its drift. How plain
It follows — if I fell into such fault,
He also may have overreached the mark,
Made mistake, by perversity of brain,
I' the whole sad strange plot, the grotesque intrigue
To make me and my friend unself ourselves,

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630. **That's . . . lifetime,** that has come to me on my deathbed. 642. **began deception,** i.e., by pretending that his income was larger than it really was. 643. **one point . . . pledged himself,** namely, to maintain Pietro and Violante at Arezzo.

693. **were,** should be.

Be other man and woman than we were!
Think it out, you who have the time! for me —
I cannot say less; more I will not say.
Leave it to God to cover and undo!
Only, my dullness should not prove too much!
— Not prove that in a certain other point
Wherein my husband blamed me — and you blame,
If I interpret smiles and shakes of head —
I was dull too. Oh, if I dared but speak!
Must I speak? I am blamed that I forwent
A way to make my husband's favor come.
That is true; I was firm, withstood, refused . . .
— Women as you are, how can I find the words?

I felt there was just one thing Guido claimed
I had no right to give nor he to take,
We being in estrangement, soul from soul;
Till, when I sought help, the Archbishop smiled,
Inquiring into privacies of life —
Said I was blamable (he stands for God) —
Nowise entitled to exemption there.
Then I obeyed — as surely had obeyed
Were the injunction "Since your husband bids,
Swallow the burning coal he proffers you!"
But I did wrong, and he gave wrong advice,
Though he were thrice Archbishop — that, I know! —
Now I have got to die and see things clear.
Remember I was barely twelve years old —
A child at marriage. I was let alone
For weeks, I told you, lived my child-life still
Even at Arezzo, when I woke and found
First . . . but I need not think of that again —
Over and ended! Try and take the sense
Of what I signify, if it must be so.
After the first, my husband, for hate's sake,
Said one eve, when the simpler cruelty
Seemed somewhat dull at edge and fit to bear,
"We have been man and wife six months almost;
How long is this your comedy to last?
Go this night to my chamber, not your own!"
At which word, I did rush — most true the charge —
And gain the Archbishop's house — he stands for God —
And fall upon my knees and clasp his feet,
Praying him hinder what my estranged soul
Refused to bear, though patient of the rest.
"Place me within a convent," I implored —
"Let me henceforward lead the virgin life
You praise in Her you bid me imitate!"
What did he answer? "Folly of ignorance!
Know, daughter, circumstances make or mar
Virginity — 'tis virtue or 'tis vice.
That which was glory in the Mother of God
Had been, for instance, damnable in Eve,
Created to be mother of mankind.
Had Eve, in answer to her Maker's speech —
'Be fruitful, multiply, replenish earth' —
Pouted, 'But I choose rather to remain
Single' — why, she had spared herself forthwith
Further probation by the apple and snake,
Been pushed straight out of Paradise! For see —
If motherhood be qualified impure,
I catch you making God command Eve sin!
— A blasphemy so like these Molinists',
I must suspect you dip into their books."
Then he pursued, " 'Twas in your covenant!"

No! There my husband never used deceit.
He never did by speech nor act imply,
"Because of our souls' yearning that we meet
And mix in soul through flesh, which yours and mine
Wear and impress, and make their visible selves,
— All which means, for the love of you and me,
Let us become one flesh, being one soul!"
He only stipulated for the wealth;
Honest so far. But when he spoke as plain —
Dreadfully honest also — "Since our souls
Stand each from each, a whole world's width between,
Give me the fleshly vesture I can reach
And rend and leave just fit for hell to burn!"—
Why, in God's name, for Guido's soul's own sake
Imperiled by polluting mine — I say,
I did resist; would I had overcome!

My heart died out at the Archbishop's smile;
— It seemed so stale and worn a way o' the world,
As though 'twere nature frowning — "Here is spring,
The sun shines as he shone at Adam's fall,
The earth requires that warmth reach everywhere;
What, must your patch of snow be saved forsooth
Because you rather fancy snow than flowers?"
Something in this style he began with me.
Last he said, savagely for a good man,
"This explains why you call your husband harsh,
Harsh to you, harsh to whom you love. God's Bread!
The poor Count has to manage a mere child

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756. **Be fruitful**, etc. Quoted from *Genesis*, 1:28. 763. **Molinists'**. See *Caponsacchi*, 151 and note, page 300.

Whose parents leave untaught the simplest things
Their duty was and privilege to teach —
Goodwives' instruction, gossips' lore; they laugh
And leave the Count the task — or leave it me!"
Then I resolved to tell a frightful thing.
"I am not ignorant — know what I say,
Declaring this is sought for hate, not love.
Sir, you may hear things like almighty God.
I tell you that my housemate, yes — the priest
My husband's brother, Canon Girolamo —
Has taught me what depraved and misnamed love
Means, and what outward signs denote the sin,
For he solicits me and says he loves,
The idle young priest with naught else to do.
My husband sees this, knows this, and lets be.
Is it your counsel I bear this beside?"
"— More scandal, and against a priest this time!
What, 'tis the Canon now?" — less snappishly —
"Rise up, my child, for such a child you are,
The rod were too advanced a punishment!
Let's try the honeyed cake. A parable!
'Without a parable spake he not to them.'
There was a ripe round long black toothsome fruit,
Even a flower-fig, the prime boast of May;
And, to the tree, said . . . either the spirit o' the fig,
Or, if we bring in men, the gardener,
Archbishop of the orchard — had I time
To try o' the two which fits in best; indeed
It might be the Creator's self, but then
The tree should bear an apple, I suppose —
Well, anyhow, one with authority said,
'Ripe fig, burst skin, regale the fig-pecker —
The bird whereof thou art a perquisite!'
'Nay,' with a flounce, replied the restif fig,
'I much prefer to keep my pulp myself;
He may go breakfastless and dinnerless,
Supperless of one crimson seed, for me!'
So, back she flopped into her bunch of leaves.
He flew off, left her — did the natural lord —
And lo, three hundred thousand bees and wasps
Found her out, feasted on her to the shuck.
Such gain the fig's that gave its bird no bite!
The moral — fools elude their proper lot,
Tempt other fools, get ruined all alike.
Therefore go home, embrace your husband quick!
Which if his Canon brother chance to see,
He will the sooner back to book again."

So, home I did go; so, the worst befell;
So, I had proof the Archbishop was just man,
And hardly that, and certainly no more.
For, miserable consequence to me,
My husband's hatred waxed nor waned at all,
His brother's boldness grew effrontery soon,
And my last stay and comfort in myself
Was forced from me; henceforth I looked to God
Only, nor cared my desecrated soul
Should have fair walls, gay windows for the world.
God's glimmer, that came through the ruin-top,
Was witness why all lights were quenched inside;
Henceforth I asked God counsel, not mankind.

So, when I made the effort, freed myself,
They said — "No care to save appearance here!
How cynic — when, how wanton, were enough!"
— Adding, it all came of my mother's life —
My own real mother, whom I never knew,
Who did wrong (if she needs must have done wrong)
Through being all her life, not my four years,
At mercy of the hateful; every beast
O' the field was wont to break that fountain-fence,
Trample the silver into mud so murk
Heaven could not find itself reflected there.
Now they cry, "Out on her, who, plashy pool,
Bequeathed turbidity and bitterness
To the daughter-stream where Guido dipped and drank!"

Well, since she had to bear this brand — let me!
The rather do I understand her now —
From my experience of what hate calls love —
Much love might be in what their love called hate.
If she sold . . . what they call, sold . . . me, her child —
I shall believe she hoped in her poor heart
That I at least might try be good and pure,
Begin to live untempted, not go doomed
And done with ere once found in fault, as she.
O and, my mother, it all came to this?
Why should I trust those that speak ill of you,
When I mistrust who speaks even well of them?
Why, since all bound to do me good, did harm,

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796. **Goodwives', gossips'.** A goodwife is the mistress of a house; a gossip is a sponsor at a baptism. 815. **Without . . . them.** Quoted from *Matthew*, 13:34. 827. **restif,** stubborn

May not you, seeming as you harmed me most,
Have meant to do most good — and feed your child
From bramble-bush, whom not one orchard-tree
But drew bough back from, nor let one fruit fall?
This it was for you sacrificed your babe?
Gained just this, giving your heart's hope away
As I might give mine, loving it as you,
If . . . but that never could be asked of me!

There, enough! I have my support again,
Again the knowledge that my babe was, is,
Will be mine only. Him, by death, I give
Outright to God, without a further care —
But not to any parent in the world —
So to be safe; why is it we repine?
What guardianship were safer could we choose?
All human plans and projects come to naught;
My life, and what I know of other lives,
Prove that — no plan nor project! God shall care!

And now you are not tired? How patient then
All of you — oh yes, patient this long while
Listening, and understanding, I am sure!
Four days ago, when I was sound and well
And like to live, no one would understand.
People were kind, but smiled, "And what of him,
Your friend, whose tonsure the rich dark-brown hides?
There, there! — your lover, do we dream he was?
A priest too — never were such naughtiness!
Still, he thinks many a long think, never fear,
After the shy pale lady — lay so light
For a moment in his arms, the lucky one!"
And so on; wherefore should I blame you much?
So we are made, such difference in minds,
Such difference too in eyes that see the minds!
That man, you misinterpret and misprise —
The glory of his nature, I had thought,
Shot itself out in white light, blazed the truth
Through every atom of his act with me.
Yet where I point you, through the crystal shrine,
Purity in quintessence, one dew-drop,
You all descry a spider in the midst.
One says, "The head of it is plain to see,"
And one, "They are the feet by which I judge,"
All say, "Those films were spun by nothing else."

Then, I must lay my babe away with God,
Nor think of him again for gratitude.
Yes, my last breath shall wholly spend itself
In one attempt more to disperse the stain,
The mist from other breath fond mouths have made,
About a lustrous and pellucid soul;
So that, when I am gone but sorrow stays,
And people need assurance in their doubt
If God yet have a servant, man a friend,
The weak a savior, and the vile a foe —
Let him be present, by the name invoked,
Giuseppe-Maria Caponsacchi!

There,
Strength comes already with the utterance!
I will remember once more for his sake
The sorrow; for he lives and is belied.
Could he be here, how he would speak for me!

I had been miserable three drear years
In that dread palace and lay passive now,
When I first learned there could be such a man.
Thus it fell: I was at a public play,
In the last days of Carnival last March,
Brought there I knew not why, but now know well.
My husband put me where I sat, in front;
Then crouched down, breathed cold through me from behind,
Stationed i' the shadow — none in front could see —
I, it was, faced the stranger-throng beneath,
The crowd with upturned faces, eyes one stare,
Voices one buzz. I looked but to the stage,
Whereon two lovers sang and interchanged,
"True life is only love, love only bliss:
I love thee — thee I love!" then they embraced.
I looked thence to the ceiling and the walls —
Over the crowd, those voices and those eyes —
My thoughts went through the roof and out, to Rome
On wings of music, waft of measured words —
Set me down there, a happy child again,
Sure that tomorrow would be festa-day,
Hearing my parents praise past festas more,
And seeing they were old if I was young,
Yet wondering why they still would end discourse
With "We must soon go, you abide your time,
And — might we haply see the proper friend
Throw his arm over you and make you safe!"

Sudden I saw him; into my lap there fell
A foolish twist of comfits, broke my dream
And brought me from the air and laid me low,
As ruined as the soaring bee that's reached
(So Pietro told me at the Villa once)

By the dust-handful. There the comfits lay;
I looked to see who flung them, and I faced
This Caponsacchi, looking up in turn.
Ere I could reason out why, I felt sure,
Whoever flung them, his was not the hand —
Up rose the round face and good-natured grin
Of one who, in effect, had played the prank,
From covert close beside the earnest face —
Fat waggish Conti, friend of all the world.
He was my husband's cousin, privileged
To throw the thing; the other, silent, grave,
Solemn almost, saw me, as I saw him.

There is a psalm Don Celestine recites,
"Had I a dove's wings, how I fain would flee!"
The psalm runs not "I hope, I pray for wings" —
Not "If wings fall from heaven, I fix them fast" —
Simply "How good it were to fly and rest,
Have hope now, and one day expect content!
How well to do what I shall never do!"
So I said, "Had there been a man like that,
To lift me with his strength out of all strife
Into the calm, how I could fly and rest!
I have a keeper in the garden here
Whose sole employment is to strike me low
If ever I, for solace, seek the sun.
Life means with me successful feigning death,
Lying stone-like, eluding notice so,
Forgoing here the turf and there the sky.
Suppose that man had been instead of this!"

Presently Conti laughed into my ear —
Had tripped up to the raised place where I sat —
"Cousin, I flung them brutishly and hard!
Because you must be hurt, to look austere
As Caponsacchi yonder, my tall friend
A-gazing now. Ah, Guido, you so close?
Keep on your knees, do! Beg her to forgive!
My cornet battered like a cannon-ball.
Good-by, I'm gone!" — nor waited the reply.
That night at supper, out my husband broke,
"Why was that throwing, that buffoonery?
Do you think I am your dupe? What man would dare
Throw comfits in a stranger lady's lap?
'Twas knowledge of you bred such insolence
In Caponsacchi; he dared shoot the bolt,
Using that Conti for his stalking-horse.
How could you see him this once and no more,
When he is always haunting hereabout
At the street-corner or the palace-side,
Publishing my shame and your impudence?
You are a wanton — I a dupe, you think?
O Christ, what hinders that I kill her quick?"
Whereat he drew his sword and feigned a thrust.

All this, now — being not so strange to me,
Used to such misconception day by day
And broken-in to bear — I bore, this time,
More quietly than woman should perhaps;
Repeated the mere truth and held my tongue.

Then he said, "Since you play the ignorant,
I shall instruct you. This amour — commenced
Or finished or midway in act, all's one —
'Tis the town-talk; so my revenge shall be.
Does he presume because he is a priest?
I warn him that the sword I wear shall pink
His lily-scented cassock through and through,
Next time I catch him underneath your eaves!"
But he had threatened with the sword so oft
And, after all, not kept his promise. All
I said was, "Let God save the innocent!
Moreover, death is far from a bad fate.
I shall go pray for you and me, not him;
And then I look to sleep, come death or, worse,
Life." So, I slept.

                    There may have elapsed a week,
When Margherita — called my waiting-maid,
Whom it is said my husband found too fair —
Who stood and heard the charge and the reply,
Who never once would let the matter rest
From that night forward, but rang changes still
On this the thrust and that the shame, and how
Good cause for jealousy cures jealous fools,
And what a paragon was this same priest
She talked about until I stopped my ears —
She said, "A week is gone; you comb your hair,
Then go mope in a corner, cheek on palm,
Till night comes round again — so, waste a week
As if your husband menaced you in sport.
Have not I some acquaintance with his tricks?
Oh no, he did not stab the serving-man
Who made and sang the rimes about me once!
For why? They sent him to the wars next day.
Nor poisoned he the foreigner, my friend,

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981. **cousin.** The word is loosely used. His brother had married Guido's sister. 985. **Had I . . . flee.** Cf. *Psalms*, 55:6.—"Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." 1008. **cornet,** a piece of paper twisted into the shape of a cone.

1034. **pink,** pierce.

Who wagered on the whiteness of my breast —
The swarth skins of our city in dispute;
For, though he paid me proper compliment,
The Count well knew he was besotted with
Somebody else, a skin as black as ink
(As all the town knew save my foreigner) —
He found and wedded presently — 'Why need
Better revenge?' — the Count asked. But what's here?
A priest that does not fight, and cannot wed,
Yet must be dealt with! If the Count took fire
For the poor pastime of a minute — me —
What were the conflagration for yourself,
Countess and lady-wife and all the rest?
The priest will perish; you will grieve too late.
So shall the city-ladies' handsomest,
Frankest, and liberalest gentleman
Die for you, to appease a scurvy dog
Hanging's too good for. Is there no escape?
Were it not simple Christian charity
To warn the priest be on his guard — save him
Assured death, save yourself from causing it?
I meet him in the street. Give me a glove,
A ring to show for token! Mum's the word!"
I answered, "If you were, as styled, my maid,
I would command you; as you are, you say,
My husband's intimate — assist his wife,
Who can do nothing but entreat 'Be still!'
Even if you speak truth and a crime is planned,
Leave help to God as I am forced to do!
There is no other help, or we should craze,
Seeing such evil with no human cure.
Reflect that God, who makes the storm desist,
Can make an angry violent heart subside.
Why should we venture teach him governance?
Never address me on this subject more!"

Next night she said, "But I went, all the same —
Aye, saw your Caponsacchi in his house,
And come back stuffed with news I must outpour.
I told him, 'Sir, my mistress is a stone;
Why should you harm her for no good you get?
For you do harm her — prowl about our place,
With the Count never distant half the street,
Lurking at every corner, would you look!
'Tis certain she has witched you with a spell.
Are there not other beauties at your beck?
We all know, Donna This and Monna That
Die for a glance of yours, yet here you gaze!
Go make them grateful, leave the stone its cold!'
And he — oh, he turned first white and then red,
And then — 'To her behest I bow myself,
Whom I love with my body and my soul;
Only a word i' the bowing! See, I write
One little word, no harm to see or hear!
Then, fear no further!' This is what he wrote.
I know you cannot read — therefore, let me!
*'My idol!'* " . . .

But I took it from her hand
And tore it into shreds. "Why, join the rest
Who harm me? Have I ever done you wrong?
People have told me 'tis you wrong myself;
Let it suffice I either feel no wrong
Or else forgive it — yet you turn my foe!
The others hunt me, and you throw a noose!"

She muttered, "Have your willful way!" I slept.

Whereupon . . . no, I leave my husband out!
It is not to do him more hurt, I speak.
Let it suffice, when misery was most,
One day, I swooned and got a respite so.
She stooped as I was slowly coming to.
This Margherita, ever on my trace,
And whispered — "Caponsacchi!"

If I drowned,
But woke afloat i' the wave with upturned eyes,
And found their first sight was a star! I turned —
For the first time, I let her have her will,
Heard passively — "The imposthume at such head,
One touch, one lancet-puncture would relieve —
And still no glance the good physician's way
Who rids you of the torment in a trice!
Still he writes letters you refuse to hear.
He may prevent your husband, kill himself,
So desperate and all fordone is he!
Just hear the pretty verse he made today!
A sonnet from Mirtillo. *'Peerless fair. . . .'*
All poetry is difficult to read —
The sense of it is, anyhow, he seeks
Leave to contrive you an escape from hell,
And for that purpose asks an interview.
I can write, I can grant it in your name,
Or, what is better, lead you to his house.
Your husband dashes you against the stones—

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1135. **imposthume**, abscess. 1140. **prevent**, anticipate.
1143. **Mirtillo.** One of the letters introduced at the trial was signed "Mirtillo." See *Caponsacchi*, 551 and note, p. 305.

This man would place each fragment in a shrine;
You hate him, love your husband!"

I returned,
"It is not true I love my husband — no,
Nor hate this man. I listen while you speak —
Assured that what you say is false, the same;
Much as when once, to me a little child,
A rough gaunt man in rags, with eyes on fire,
A crowd of boys and idlers at his heels,
Rushed as I crossed the Square, and held my head
In his two hands, 'Here's she will let me speak!
You little girl, whose eyes do good to mine,
I am the Pope, am Sextus, now the Sixth;
And that Twelfth Innocent, proclaimed today,
Is Lucifer disguised in human flesh!
The angels, met in conclave, crowned me!' — thus
He gibbered and I listened; but I knew
All was delusion, ere folk interposed,
'Unfasten him, the maniac!' Thus I know
All your report of Caponsacchi false,
Folly or dreaming. I have seen so much
By that adventure at the spectacle,
The face I fronted that one first, last time;
He would belie it by such words and thoughts.
Therefore while you profess to show him me,
I ever see his own face. Get you gone!"

"— That will I, nor once open mouth again —
No, by Saint Joseph and the Holy Ghost!
On your head be the damage, so adieu!"

And so more days, more deeds I must forget,
Till . . . what a strange thing now is to declare!
Since I say anything, say all if true!
And how my life seems lengthened as to serve!
It may be idle or inopportune,
But, true? — why, what was all I said but truth,
Even when I found that such as are untrue
Could only take the truth in through a lie?
Now — I am speaking truth to the Truth's self;
God will lend credit to my words this time.

It had got half through April. I arose
One vivid daybreak — who had gone to bed
In the old way my wont those last three years,
Careless until, the cup drained, I should die.
The last sound in my ear, the over-night,
Had been a something let drop on the sly
In prattle by Margherita, "Soon enough
Gayeties end, now Easter's past; a week,
And the Archbishop gets him back to Rome —
Everyone leaves the town for Rome, this spring —
Even Caponsacchi, out of heart and hope,
Resigns himself and follows with the flock."
I heard this drop and drop like rain outside
Fast-falling through the darkness while she spoke;
So had I heard with like indifference,
"And Michael's pair of wings will arrive first
At Rome, to introduce the company,
And bear him from our picture where he fights
Satan — expect to have that dragon loose
And never a defender!" — my sole thought
Being still, as night came, "Done, another day!
How good to sleep and so get nearer death!" —
When, what, first thing at daybreak, pierced the sleep
With a summons to me? Up I sprang alive,
Light in me, light without me, everywhere
Change! A broad yellow sunbeam was let fall
From heaven to earth — a sudden drawbridge lay,
Along which marched a myriad merry motes,
Mocking the flies that crossed them and recrossed
In rival dance, companions new-born too.
On the house-eaves, a dripping shag of weed
Shook diamonds on each dull gray lattice-square,
As first one, then another bird leapt by,
And light was off, and, lo, was back again,
Always with one voice — where are two such joys? —
The blessed building-sparrow! I stepped forth,
Stood on the terrace — o'er the roofs, such sky!
My heart sang, "I too am to go away,
I too have something I must care about,
Carry away with me to Rome, to Rome!
The bird brings hither sticks and hairs and wool,
And nowhere else i' the world; what fly breaks rank,
Falls out of the procession that befits,
From window here to window there, with all
The world to choose — so well he knows his course?
I have my purpose and my motive too,
My march to Rome, like any bird or fly!
Had I been dead! How right to be alive!
Last night I almost prayed for leave to die,

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1163. **that Twelfth Innocent, proclaimed today.** Innocent XII (1615-1700) was proclaimed pope on July 12, 1691. There has never been a Pope Sextus (the Sixth).

1204-1208. **And Michael's . . . defender.** Lines 1204-1208 refer to a fresco in the Church of San Francesco at Arezzo.

Wished Guido all his pleasure with the sword
Or the poison — poison, sword, was but a trick,
Harmless, may God forgive him the poor jest!
My life is charmed, will last till I reach Rome!
Yesterday, but for the sin — ah, nameless be
The deed I could have dared against myself!
Now — see if I will touch an unripe fruit,
And risk the health I want to have and use!
Not to live, now, would be the wickedness —
For life means to make haste and go to Rome
And leave Arezzo, leave all woes at once!"

Now, understand here, by no means mistake!
Long ago had I tried to leave that house
When it seemed such procedure would stop sin;
And still failed more the more I tried — at first
The Archbishop, as I told you; next, our lord
The Governor — indeed I found my way;
I went to the great palace where he rules,
Though I knew well 'twas he who — when I gave
A jewel or two, themselves had given me,
Back to my parents — since they wanted bread,
They who had never let me want a nosegay — he
Spoke of the jail for felons, if they kept
What was first theirs, then mine, so doubly theirs,
Though all the while my husband's most of all!
I knew well who had spoke the word wrought this;
Yet, being in extremity, I fled
To the Governor, as I say — scarce opened lip
When — the cold cruel snicker close behind —
Guido was on my trace, already there,
Exchanging nod and wink for shrug and smile,
And I — pushed back to him and, for my pains,
Paid with . . but why remember what is past?
I sought out a poor friar the people call
The Roman, and confessed my sin which came
Of their sin — that fact could not be repressed —
The frightfulness of my despair in God;
And feeling, through the grate, his horror shake,
Implored him, "Write for me who cannot write,
Apprise my parents, make them rescue me!
You bid me be courageous and trust God.
Do you in turn dare somewhat, trust and write,
'Dear friends, who used to be my parents once,
And now declare you have no part in me,
This is some riddle I want wit to solve,
Since you must love me with no difference.
Even suppose you altered — there's your hate,
To ask for; hate of you two dearest ones
I shall find liker love than love found here,
If husbands love their wives. Take me away
And hate me as you do the gnats and fleas,
Even the scorpions! How I shall rejoice!'
Write that and save me!" And he promised — wrote
Or did not write; things never changed at all.
He was not like the Augustinian here!
Last, in a desperation, I appealed
To friends, whoever wished me better days,
To Guillichini, that's of kin — "What, I —
Travel to Rome with you? A flying gout
Bids me deny my heart and mind my leg!"
Then I tried Conti, used to brave — laugh back
The louring thunder when his cousin scowled
At me protected by his presence: "You —
Who well know what you cannot save me from —
Carry me off! What frightens you, a priest?"
He shook his head, looked grave — "Above my strength!
Guido has claws that scratch, shows feline teeth;
A formidabler foe than I dare fret —
Give me a dog to deal with, twice the size!
Of course I am a priest and Canon too,
But . . . by the bye . . . though both, not quite so bold
As he, my fellow-Canon, brother-priest,
The personage in such ill odor here
Because of the reports — pure birth o' the brain!
Our Caponsacchi, he's your true Saint George
To slay the monster, set the Princess free,
And have the whole High-Altar to himself.
I always think so when I see that piece
I' the Pieve (that's his church and mine, you know),
Though you drop eyes at mention of his name!"

That name had got to take a half-grotesque,
Half-ominous, wholly enigmatic sense,
Like any by-word, broken bit of song

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1263. **who had spoke.** It was Guido.

1292. **He was . . . here.** See *Caponsacchi*, 2031 and note, page 322. 1295. **That's of kin.** He was related to Guido. 1312-1313. **Saint George . . . free.** See note on lines 1744-45, page 319. 1315. **that piece**, a picture of St. George killing the dragon, by George Vasari (an Italian painter of the 16th century). It is at the high altar of the church of S. Maria della Pieve, in Arezzo.

Born with a meaning, changed by mouth and mouth
That mix it in a sneer or smile, as chance
Bids, till it now means naught but ugliness
And perhaps shame.

— All this intends to say,
That, over-night, the notion of escape
Had seemed distemper, dreaming; and the name —
Not the man, but the name of him, thus made
Into a mockery and disgrace — why, she
Who uttered it persistently, had laughed,
"I name his name, and there you start and wince
As criminal from the red tongs' touch!" — yet now,
Now, as I stood letting morn bathe me bright,
Choosing which butterfly should bear my news —
The white, the brown one, or that tinier blue —
The Margherita, I detested so,
In she came — "The fine day, the good spring time!
What, up and out at window? That is best.
No thought of Caponsacchi? — who stood there
All night on one leg, like the sentry crane,
Under the pelting of your water-spout —
Looked last look at your lattice ere he leave
Our city, bury his dead hope at Rome.
Aye, go to looking-glass and make you fine,
While he may die ere touch one least loose hair
You drag at with the comb in such a rage!"

I turned — "Tell Caponsacchi he may come!"

"Tell him to come? Ah, but, for charity,
A truce to fooling! Come? What — come this eve?
Peter and Paul! But I see through the trick!
Yes, come, and take a flower-pot on his head,
Flung from your terrace! No joke, sincere truth?"

How plainly I perceived hell flash and fade
O' the face of her — the doubt that first paled joy,
Then, final reassurance I indeed
Was caught now, never to be free again!
What did I care? — who felt myself of force
To play with silk, and spurn the horsehair-springe.

"But — do you know that I have bade him come,
And in your own name? I presumed so much,
Knowing the thing you needed in your heart.
But somehow — what had I to show in proof?
He would not come: half-promised, that was all,
And wrote the letters you refused to read.
What is the message that shall move him now?"

"After the Ave Maria, at first dark,
I will be standing on the terrace, say!"

"I would I had a good long lock of hair
Should prove I was not lying! Never mind!"

Off she went — "May he not refuse, that's all —
Fearing a trick!"

I answered, "He will come."
And, all day, I sent prayer like incense up
To God the strong, God the beneficent,
God ever mindful in all strife and strait,
Who, for our own good, makes the need extreme,
Till at the last he puts forth might and saves.
An old rime came into my head and rang
Of how a virgin, for the faith of God,
Hid herself, from the Paynims that pursued,
In a cave's heart; until a thunderstone,
Wrapped in a flame, revealed the couch and prey;
And they laughed — "Thanks to lightning, ours at last!"
And she cried, "Wrath of God, assert his love!
Servant of God, thou fire, befriend his child!"
And lo, the fire she grasped at, fixed its flash,
Lay in her hand a calm, cold, dreadful sword
She brandished till pursuers strewed the ground,
So did the souls within them die away,
As o'er the prostrate bodies, sworded, safe,
She walked forth to the solitudes and Christ:
So should I grasp the lightning and be saved!

And still, as the day wore, the trouble grew
Whereby I guessed there would be born a star,
Until at an intense throe of the dusk,
I started up, was pushed, I dare to say,
Out on the terrace, leaned and looked at last
Where the deliverer waited me — the same
Silent and solemn face, I first descried
At the spectacle, confronted mine once more.

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1357. **horeshair-springe,** a trap made of horsehair.

1365. **Ave Maria,** the evening prayer, which begins with these words, meaning *Hail Mary*. 1378. **Paynims,** pagans. 1379. **thunderstone,** a stone supposed to be the material part of lightning.

So was that minute twice vouchsafed me, so
The manhood, wasted then, was still at watch
To save me yet a second time: no change
Here, though all else changed in the changing world!

I spoke on the instant, as my duty bade,
In some such sense as this, whatever the phrase,

"Friend, foolish words were borne from you to me;
Your soul behind them is the pure strong wind,
Not dust and feathers which its breath may bear.
These to the witless seem the wind itself,
Since proving thus the first of it they feel.
If by mischance you blew offense my way,
The straws are dropped, the wind desists no whit,
And how such strays were caught up in the street
And took a motion from you, why inquire?
I speak to the strong soul, no weak disguise.
If it be truth — why should I doubt it truth? —
You serve God specially, as priests are bound,
And care about me, stranger as I am,
So far as wish my good, that — miracle
I take to imitate he wills you serve
By saving me — what else can he direct?
Here is the service. Since a long while now,
I am in course of being put to death;
While death concerned nothing but me, I bowed
The head and bade, in heart, my husband strike.
Now I imperil something more, it seems,
Something that's trulier me than this myself,
Something I trust in God and you to save.
You go to Rome, they tell me: take me there;
Put me back with my people!"

He replied —
The first word I heard ever from his lips,
All himself in it — an eternity
Of speech, to match the immeasurable depth
O' the soul that then broke silence — "I am yours."

So did the star rise, soon to lead my step,
Lead on, nor pause before it should stand still
Above the House o' the Babe — my babe to be,
That knew me first and thus made me know him,
That had his right of life and claim on mine,
And would not let me die till he was born,
But pricked me at the heart to save us both,
Saying, "Have you the will? Leave God the way!"
And the way was Caponsacchi — "mine," thank God!
He was mine, he is mine, he will be mine.

No pause i' the leading and the light! I know,
Next night there was a cloud came, and not he,
But I prayed through the darkness till it broke
And let him shine. The second night, he came.

"The plan is rash; the project desperate.
In such a flight needs must I risk your life,
Give food for falsehood, folly or mistake,
Ground for your husband's rancor and revenge" —
So he began again, with the same face.
I felt that, the same loyalty — one star
Turning now red that was so white before —
One service apprehended newly; just
A word of mine and there the white was back!

"No, friend, for you will take me! 'Tis yourself
Risk all, not I — who let you, for I trust
In the compensating great God; enough!
I know you; when is it that you will come?"

"Tomorrow at the day's dawn." Then I heard
What I should do: how to prepare for flight
And where to fly.

That night my husband bade
"— You, whom I loathe, beware you break my sleep
This whole night! Couch beside me like the corpse
I would you were!" The rest you know, I think —
How I found Caponsacchi and escaped.

And this man, men call sinner? Jesus Christ!
Of whom men said, with mouths Thyself mad'st once,
"He hath a devil" — say he was Thy saint,
My Caponsacchi! Shield and show — unshroud
In Thine own time the glory of the soul
If aught obscure — if ink-spot, from vile pens
Scribbling a charge against him (I was glad
Then, for the first time, that I could not write) —
Flirted his way, have flecked the blaze!

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1470. **He hath a devil.** Jesus is so referred to in *John* 7:20 and 8:48 by people who disliked his teachings.

For me,
'Tis otherwise: let men take, sift my thoughts —
Thoughts I throw like the flax for sun to bleach!
I did pray, do pray, in the prayer shall die,
"Oh, to have Caponsacchi for my guide!"
Ever the face upturned to mine, the hand
Holding my hand across the world — a sense
That reads, as only such can read, the mark
God sets on woman, signifying so
She should — shall peradventure — be divine;
Yet 'ware, the while, how weakness mars the print
And makes confusion, leaves the thing men see —
Not this man sees — who from his soul, rewrites
The obliterated charter — love and strength
Mending what's marred. "So kneels a votarist,
Weeds some poor waste traditionary plot
Where shrine once was, where temple yet may be,
Purging the place but worshiping the while,
By faith and not by sight, sight clearest so —
Such way the saints work" — says Don Celestine.
But I, not privileged to see a saint
Of old when such walked earth with crown and palm,
If I call "saint" what saints call something else —
The saints must bear with me, impute the fault
To a soul i' the bud, so starved by ignorance,
Stinted of warmth, it will not blow this year
Nor recognize the orb which spring-flowers know.
But if meanwhile some insect with a heart
Worth floods of lazy music, spendthrift joy —
Some firefly renounced spring for my dwarfed cup,
Crept close to me, brought luster for the dark,
Comfort against the cold — what though excess
Of comfort should miscall the creature — sun?
What did the sun to hinder while harsh hands,
Petal by petal, crude and colorless,
Tore me? This one heart gave me all the spring!

Is all told? There's the journey; and where's time
To tell you how that heart burst out in shine?
Yet certain points do press on me too hard.
Each place must have a name, though I forget:
How strange it was — there where the plain begins
And the small river mitigates its flow —
When eve was fading fast, and my soul sank,
And he divined what surge of bitterness,
In overtaking me, would float me back
Whence I was carried by the striding day —
So — "This gray place was famous once," said he —
And he began that legend of the place
As if in answer to the unspoken fear,
And told me all about a brave man dead,
Which lifted me and let my soul go on!
How did he know too — at that town's approach
By the rock-side — that in coming near the signs
Of life, the house-roofs and the church and tower,
I saw the old boundary and wall o' the world
Rise plain as ever round me, hard and cold,
As if the broken circlet joined again,
Tightened itself about me with no break —
As if the town would turn Arezzo's self —
The husband there — the friends my enemies,
All ranged against me, not an avenue
To try, but would be blocked and drive me back
On him — this other . . . oh, the heart in that!
Did not he find, bring, put into my arms
A new-born babe? — and I saw faces beam:
Of the young mother proud to teach me joy,
And gossips round expecting my surprise
At the sudden hole through earth that lets in heaven.
I could believe himself by his strong will
Had woven around me what I thought the world
We went along in, every circumstance,
Towns, flowers and faces, all things helped so well!
For, through the journey, was it natural
Such comfort should arise from first to last?
As I look back, all is one milky way;
Still bettered more, the more remembered, so
Do new stars bud while I but search for old,
And fill all gaps i' the glory, and grow him —
Him I now see make the shine everywhere.
Even at the last when the bewildered flesh,
The cloud of weariness about my soul
Clogging too heavily, sucked down all sense —
Still its last voice was, "He will watch and care;
Let the strength go, I am content — he stays!"
I doubt not he did stay and care for all —
From that sick minute when the head swam round,

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1514. **too hard**, i.e., for me to keep silent.

And the eyes looked their last and died on him,
As in his arms he caught me, and, you say,
Carried me in, that tragical red eve,
And laid me where I next returned to life
In the other red of morning, two red plates
That crushed together, crushed the time between,
And are since then a solid fire to me —
When in, my dreadful husband and the world
Broke — and I saw him, master, by hell's right,
And saw my angel helplessly held back
By guards that helped the malice — the lamb prone,
The serpent towering and triumphant — then
Came all the strength back in a sudden swell,
I did for once see right, do right, give tongue
The adequate protest; for a worm must turn
If it would have its wrong observed by God.
I did spring up, attempt to thrust aside
That ice-block 'twixt the sun and me, lay low
The neutralizer of all good and truth.
If I sinned so — never obey voice more
O' the Just and Terrible, who bids us — "Bear!"
Not — "Stand by, bear to see my angels bear!"
I am clear it was on impulse to serve God,
Not save myself — no — nor my child unborn!
Had I else waited patiently till now? —
Who saw my old kind parents, silly-sooth
And too much trustful, for their worst of faults,
Cheated, browbeaten, stripped and starved, cast out
Into the kennel. I remonstrated,
Then sank to silence, for — their woes at end,
Themselves gone — only I was left to plague.
If only I was threatened and belied,
What matter? I could bear it and did bear;
It was a comfort, still one lot for all —
They were not persecuted for my sake
And I, estranged, the single happy one.
But when at last, all by myself I stood
Obeying the clear voice which bade me rise,
Not for my own sake but my babe unborn,
And take the angel's hand was sent to help —
And found the old adversary athwart the path —
Not my hand simply struck from the angel's, but
The very angel's self made foul i' the face
By the fiend who struck there — that I would not bear,
That only I resisted! So, my first
And last resistance was invincible.
Prayers move God; threats, and nothing else, move men!
I must have prayed a man as he were God
When I implored the Governor to right
My parents' wrongs; the answer was a smile.
The Archbishop — did I clasp his feet enough,
Hide my face hotly on them, while I told
More than I dared make my own mother know?
The profit was — compassion and a jest.
This time, the foolish prayers were done with, right
Used might, and solemnized the sport at once.
All was against the combat; vantage, mine?
The runaway avowed, the accomplice-wife,
In company with the plan-contriving priest?
Yet, shame thus rank and patent, I struck, bare,
At foe from head to foot in magic mail,
And off it withered, cobweb-armory
Against the lightning! 'Twas truth singed the lies
And saved me, not the vain sword nor weak speech!

You see, I will not have the service fail!
I say, the angel saved me; I am safe!
Others may want and wish, I wish nor want
One point o' the circle plainer, where I stand
Traced round about with white to front the world.
What of the calumny I came across,
What o' the way to the end? — the end crowns all.
The judges judged aright i' the main, gave me
The uttermost of my heart's desire, a truce
From torture and Arezzo, balm for hurt,
With the quiet nuns — God recompense the good! —
Who said and sang away the ugly past.
And, when my final fortune was revealed,
What safety, while, amid my parents' arms,
My babe was given me! Yes, he saved my babe;
It would not have peeped forth, the bird-like thing,
Through that Arezzo noise and trouble; back
Had it returned nor ever let me see!
But the sweet peace cured all, and let me live
And give my bird the life among the leaves
God meant him! Weeks and months of quietude,
I could lie in such peace and learn so much —
Begin the task, I see how needful now,
Of understanding somewhat of my past —
Know life a little, I should leave so soon.
Therefore, because this man restored my soul,
All has been right; I have gained my gain, enjoyed

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1587. **silly-sooth**, unsuspecting.

As well as suffered — nay, got foretaste too
Of better life beginning where this ends —
All through the breathing-while allowed me thus,
Which let good premonitions reach my soul
Unthwarted, and benignant influence flow
And interpenetrate and change my heart,
Uncrossed by what was wicked — nay, unkind.
For, as the weakness of my time drew nigh,
Nobody did me one disservice more,
Spoke coldly or looked strangely, broke the love
I lay in the arms of, till my boy was born,
Born all in love, with naught to spoil the bliss
A whole long fortnight. In a life like mine
A fortnight filled with bliss is long and much.
All women are not mothers of a boy,
Though they live twice the length of my whole life,
And, as they fancy, happily all the same.
There I lay, then, all my great fortnight long,
As if it would continue, broaden out
Happily more and more, and lead to heaven.
Christmas before me — was not that a chance?
I never realized God's birth before —
How he grew likest God in being born.
This time I felt like Mary, had my babe
Lying a little on my breast like hers.
So all went on till, just four days ago —
The night and the tap.

Oh, it shall be success
To the whole of our poor family! My friends
. . . Nay, father and mother — give me back my word!
They have been rudely stripped of life, disgraced
Like children who must needs go clothed too fine,
Carry the garb of Carnival in Lent.
If they too much affected frippery,
They have been punished and submit themselves,
Say no word. All is over; they see God,
Who will not be extreme to mark their fault
Or he had granted respite. They are safe.

For that most woeful man my husband once,
Who, needing respite, still draws vital breath,
I — pardon him? So far as lies in me,
I give him for his good the life he takes,
Praying the world will therefore acquiesce.
Let him make God amends — none, none to me
Who thank him rather that, whereas strange fate
Mockingly styled him husband and me wife,
Himself this way at least pronounced divorce,
Blotted the marriage-bond; this blood of mine
Flies forth exultingly at any door,
Washes the parchment white, and thanks the blow.
We shall not meet in this world nor the next,
But where will God be absent? In his face
Is light, but in his shadow healing too;
Let Guido touch the shadow and be healed!
And as my presence was importunate —
My earthly good, temptation and a snare —
Nothing about me but drew somehow down
His hate upon me — somewhat so excused
Therefore, since hate was thus the truth of him —
May my evanishment forevermore
Help further to relieve the heart that cast
Such object of its natural loathing forth!
So he was made; he nowise made himself.
I could not love him, but his mother did.
His soul has never lain beside my soul;
But for the unresisting body — thanks!
He burned that garment spotted by the flesh.
Whatever he touched is rightly ruined; plague
It caught, and disinfection it had craved
Still but for Guido. I am saved through him
So as by fire; to him — thanks and farewell!

Even for my babe, my boy, there's safety thence —
From the sudden death of me, I mean; we poor
Weak souls, how we endeavor to be strong!
I was already using up my life —
This portion, now, should do him such a good,
This other go to keep off such an ill!
The great life; see, a breath and it is gone!
So is detached, so left all by itself
The little life, the fact which means so much.
Shall not God stoop the kindlier to his work,
His marvel of creation, foot would crush,
Now that the hand he trusted to receive
And hold it, lets the treasure fall perforce?
The better; he shall have in orphanage
His own way all the clearlier. If my babe
Outlived the hour — and he has lived two weeks —
It is through God who knows I am not by.
Who is it makes the soft gold hair turn black,
And sets the tongue, might lie so long at rest,
Trying to talk? Let us leave God alone!
Why should I doubt he will explain in time
What I feel now, but fail to find the words?
My babe nor was, nor is, nor yet shall be
Count Guido Franceschini's child at all —
Only his mother's, born of love, not hate!
So shall I have my rights in after-time.
It seems absurd, impossible today;
So seems so much else, not explained but known!

Ah! Friends, I thank and bless you every one!

No more now; I withdraw from earth and man
To my own soul, compose myself for God.

Well, and there is more! Yes, my end of breath
Shall bear away my soul in being true! 1755
He is still here, not outside with the world,
Here, here, I have him in his rightful place!
'Tis now, when I am most upon the move,
I feel for what I verily find — again
The face, again the eyes, again, through all,
The heart and its immeasurable love 1761
Of my one friend, my only, all my own,
Who put his breast between the spears and me.
Ever with Caponsacchi! Otherwise
Here alone would be failure, loss to me —
How much more loss to him, with life debarred
From giving life, love locked from love's display,
The day-star stopped its task that makes night morn!
O lover of my life, O soldier-saint, 1769
No work begun shall ever pause for death!
Love will be helpful to me more and more
I' the coming course, the new path I must tread —
My weak hand in thy strong hand, strong for that!
Tell him that if I seem without him now, 1774
That's the world's insight! Oh, he understands!
He is at Civita — do I once doubt
The world again is holding us apart?
He had been here, displayed in my behalf
The broad brow that reverberates the truth,
And flashed the word God gave him, back to man! 1780
I know where the free soul is flown! My fate
Will have been hard for even him to bear;
Let it confirm him in the trust of God,
Showing how holily he dared the deed!
And, for the rest — say, from the deed, no touch 1785
Of harm came, but all good, all happiness,
Not one faint fleck of failure! Why explain?
What I see, oh, he sees and how much more!
Tell him — I know not wherefore the true word 1789
Should fade and fall unuttered at the last —
It was the name of him I sprang to meet
When came the knock, the summons, and the end.
"My great heart, my strong hand are back again!"
I would have sprung to these, beckoning across
Murder and hell gigantic and distinct 1795
O' the threshold, posted to exclude me heaven;
He is ordained to call and I to come!
Do not the dead wear flowers when dressed for God?
Say — I am all in flowers from head to foot!
Say — not one flower of all he said and did,
Might seem to flit unnoticed, fade unknown,
But dropped a seed, has grown a balsam-tree
Whereof the blossoming perfumes the place
At this supreme of moments! He is a priest;
He cannot marry therefore, which is right;
I think he would not marry if he could. 1806
Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,
Mere imitation of the inimitable;
In heaven we have the real and true and sure.
'Tis there they neither marry nor are given
In marriage but are as the angels; right, 1811
Oh, how right that is, how like Jesus Christ
To say that! Marriage-making for the earth,
With gold so much — birth, power, repute so much,
Or beauty, youth so much, in lack of these!
Be as the angels rather, who, apart, 1816
Know themselves into one, are found at length
Married, but marry never, no, nor give
In marriage; they are man and wife at once
When the true time is: here we have to wait
—Not so long neither! Could we by a wish 1821
Have what we will and get the future now,
Would we wish aught done undone in the past?
So, let him wait God's instant men call years;
Meantime hold hard by truth and his great soul, 1825
Do out the duty! Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of his light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise.
(1868-1869)

## HERVÉ RIEL

### I

On the sea and at the Hogue, sixteen hundred ninety-two,
  Did the English fight the French — woe to France!

---

1776. **He is at Civita.** Caponsacchi had been banished to Civita Vecchia, a seaport near Rome.

1810-1811. **'Tis there, etc.** From *Matthew*, 22:30.—"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

*Hervé Riel.* This poem is based upon an incident of the war between France and England in 1692, over the succession of William of Orange to the English throne. The French took the side of James II, who had been deposed, and were fighting for his restoration. The united fleets of England and Holland, under Admiral Russell, crushed the French fleet, under Admiral Tourville (line 43), but several of the French ships under Damfreville (line 8) were saved from capture as related in the poem.

Browning found the story among the town records of Saint Malo when, in 1867, he visited Le Croisic, the home of Hervé Riel, in Brittany.

1. **the Hogue,** the name of a fort and of a cape on the northeast coast of France.

And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter through the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises a shoal of sharks pursue,
Came crowding ship in ship to Saint Malo on the Rance,
With the English fleet in view.

2

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfreville;
Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all;
And they signaled to the place,
"Help the winners of a race!
Get us guidance, give us harbor, take us quick — or, quicker still,
Here's the English can and will!"

3

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on board;
"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?" laughed they.
"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and scored,
Shall the *Formidable* here, with her twelve and eighty guns,
Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons,
And with flow at full beside?
Now, 'tis slackest ebb of tide.
Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!"

4

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:
"Here's the English at our heels; would you have them take in tow
All that's left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?
Better run the ships aground!"
(Ended Damfreville his speech).
"Not a minute more to wait!
Let the Captains all and each
Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the beach!
France must undergo her fate.

5

"Give the word!" But no such word
Was ever spoke or heard;
For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
— A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate — first, second, third?
No such man of mark, and meet
With his betters to compete!
But a simple Breton sailor pressed by Tourville for the fleet,
A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.

6

And "What mockery or malice have we here?" cries Hervé Riel;
"Are you mad, you Malouins? Are you cowards, fools, or rogues?
Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings, tell
On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell
'Twixt the offing here and Grève, where the river disembogues?
Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for?
Morn and eve, night and day,
Have I piloted your bay,
Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.
Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than fifty Hogues!
Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me there's a way!
Only let me lead the line,
Have the biggest ship to steer,
Get this *Formidable* clear,
Make the others follow mine,
And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well,
Right to Solidor past Grève,
And there lay them safe and sound;
And if one ship misbehave —
Keel so much as grate the ground —
Why, I've nothing but my life — here's my head!" cries Hervé Riel.

7

Not a minute more to wait.
"Steer us in, then, small and great!
Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its chief.
Captains, give the sailor place!
He is Admiral, in brief.

---

5. **Saint Malo**, a fortified seaport on an island at the mouth of the Rance River, west of the cape. 18. **the Formidable**, the name of the leading French ship. 30. **Plymouth Sound.** Plymouth is a great British naval station on the southern coast of England.

44. **Croisickese**, a native of Croisic, in Brittany. 46. **Malouins**, people of Saint Malo. 49. **Grève**, the sands between St. Malo and Mont St. Michel, a rocky island off the coast of Normandy. **disembogues**, empties. 53. **Solidor**, a fortified town at the mouth of the Rance; also the name of a fort in the town.

Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
See the noble fellow's face
As the big ship, with a bound,
Clears the entry like a hound,
Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's profound!
See, safe through shoal and rock,
How they follow in a flock,
Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
Not a spar that comes to grief!
The peril, see, is past,
All are harbored to the last,
And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!" — sure as fate,
Up the English come — too late!

8

So, the storm subsides to calm;
They see the green trees wave
On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
Hearts that bled are stanched with balm.
"Just our rapture to enhance,
Let the English rake the bay,
Gnash their teeth and glare askance
As they cannonade away!
'Neath rampired Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
Out burst all with one accord,
"This is Paradise for Hell!
Let France, let France's King
Thank the man that did the thing!"
What a shout, and all one word,
"Hervé Riel!"
As he stepped in front once more,
Not a symptom of surprise
In the frank blue Breton eyes,
Just the same man as before.

9

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
I must speak out at the end,
Though I find the speaking hard.
Praise is deeper than the lips;
You have saved the King his ships,
You must name your own reward.
'Faith, our sun was near eclipse!
Demand whate'er you will,
France remains your debtor still.
Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not Damfreville."

10

Then a beam of fun outbroke
On the bearded mouth that spoke,
As the honest heart laughed through
Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
"Since I needs must say my say,
Since on board the duty's done,
And from Malo Roads to Croisic Point, what is it but a run? —
Since 'tis ask and have, I may —
Since the others go ashore —
Come! A good whole holiday!
Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"
That he asked and that he got — nothing more.

11

Name and deed alike are lost:
Not a pillar nor a post
In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
Not a head in white and black
On a single fishing-smack,
In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack
All that France saved from the fight whence England bore the bell.
Go to Paris; rank on rank
Search the heroes flung pell-mell
On the Louvre, face and flank!
You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
So, for better and for worse,
Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife, the Belle Aurore!

*(1867; 1871)*

## HOUSE

Shall I sonnet-sing you about myself?
Do I live in a house you would like to see?
Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf?
"Unlock my heart with a sonnet-key"?

Invite the world, as my betters have done?
"Take notice: this building remains on view,
Its suites of reception every one,
Its private apartment and bedroom too;

"For a ticket, apply to the Publisher."
No; thanking the public, I must decline.
A peep through my window, if folk prefer;
But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine!

---

92. **rampired,** protected with ramparts.

124. **Leave . . . Belle Aurore.** The hero asked for a permanent release, but Browning departs from the historic fact to heighten the dramatic value of the story. 129. **head,** figurehead. 135. **the Louvre,** the great palace and art gallery of Paris.

I have mixed with a crowd and heard free talk
In a foreign land where an earthquake chanced
And a house stood gaping, naught to balk
Man's eye wherever he gazed or glanced.

The whole of the frontage shaven sheer,
The inside gaped; exposed to day,
Right and wrong and common and queer,
Bare, as the palm of your hand, it lay.

The owner? Oh, he had been crushed, no doubt!
"Odd tables and chairs for a man of wealth!
What a parcel of musty old books about!
He smoked — no wonder he lost his health!

"I doubt if he bathed before he dressed.
A brasier? — the pagan, he burned perfumes!
You see it is proved, what the neighbors guessed:
His wife and himself had separate rooms."

Friends, the goodman of the house at least
Kept house to himself till an earthquake came;
'Tis the fall of its frontage permits you feast
On the inside arrangement you praise or blame.

Outside should suffice for evidence;
And whoso desires to penetrate
Deeper, must dive by the spirit-sense —
No optics like yours, at any rate!

"Hoity-toity! A street to explore,
Your house the exception! '*With this same key*
*Shakespeare unlocked his heart,*' once more!"
Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he!
(1876)

## SHOP

So, friend, your shop was all your house!
Its front, astonishing the street,
Invited view from man and mouse
To what diversity of treat
Behind its glass — the single sheet!

What gimcracks, genuine Japanese —
Gape-jaw and goggle-eye, the frog;
Dragons, owls, monkeys, beetles, geese;
Some crush-nosed human-hearted dog —
Queer names, too, such a catalogue!

I thought "And he who owns the wealth
Which blocks the window's vastitude —
Ah, could I peep at him by stealth
Behind his ware, pass shop, intrude
On house itself, what scenes were viewed!

"If wide and showy thus the shop,
What must the habitation prove?
The true house with no name a-top —
The mansion, distant one remove,
Once get him off his traffic-groove!

"Pictures he likes, or books perhaps;
And as for buying most and best,
Commend me to these city chaps!
Or else he's social, takes his rest
On Sundays, with a Lord for guest.

"Some suburb-palace, parked about
And gated grandly, built last year —
The four-mile walk to keep off gout;
Or big seat sold by bankrupt peer —
But then he takes the rail, that's clear.

"Or, stop! I wager, taste selects
Some out-o'-the-way, some all-unknown
Retreat; the neighborhood suspects
Little that he who rambles lone
Makes Rothschild tremble on his throne!"

Nowise! Nor Mayfair residence
Fit to receive and entertain —
Nor Hampstead villa's kind defense
From noise and crowd, from dust and drain —
Nor country-box was soul's domain!

Nowise! At back of all that spread
Of merchandise, woe's me, I find
A hole i' the wall where, heels by head,
The owner couched, his ware behind —
In cupboard suited to his mind.

For why? He saw no use of life
But, while he drove a roaring trade,
To chuckle, "Customers are rife!"
To chafe, "So much hard cash outlaid,
Yet zero in my profits made!

"This novelty costs pains, but — takes?
Cumbers my counter! Stock no more!
This article, no such great shakes,
Fizzes like wildfire? Underscore
The cheap thing — thousands to the fore!"

---

38-39. **With this . . . heart.** Quoted from Wordsworth's *Scorn Not the Sonnet*, 2-3. Many poets have sung about themselves in sonnets—Dante, Petrarch, Sidney, Spenser, Milton, Keats, Mrs. Browning, D. G. Rossetti.

*Shop.* 5. **single sheet**, single pane of glass.

30. **takes the rail**, gets an advantage (a term from horse-racing). 35. **Rothschild**, the name of a famous Jewish family of bankers, noted for enormous wealth and influence. 36, 38. **Mayfair, Hampstead**, fashionable sections of London.

'Twas lodging best to live most nigh
(Cramp, coffinlike as crib might be)
Receipt of Custom; ear and eye
Wanted no outworld: "Hear and see
The bustle in the shop!" quoth he.

My fancy of a merchant-prince
Was different. Through his wares we groped
Our darkling way to — not to mince
The matter — no black den where moped
The master if we interloped!

Shop was shop only; household-stuff?
What did he want with comforts there?
"Walls, ceiling, floor, stay blank and rough,
So goods on sale show rich and rare!
'*Sell and scud home*' be shop's affair!"

What might he deal in? Gems, suppose!
Since somehow business must be done
At cost of trouble — see, he throws
You choice of jewels, every one,
Good, better, best, star, moon, and sun!

Which lies within your power of purse?
This ruby that would tip aright
Solomon's scepter? Oh, your nurse
Wants simply coral, the delight
Of teething baby — stuff to bite!

Howe'er your choice fell, straight you took
Your purchase, prompt your money rang
On counter — scarce the man forsook
His study of the *Times*, just swang
Till-ward his hand that stopped the clang —

Then off made buyer with a prize,
Then seller to his *Times* returned;
And so did day wear, wear, till eyes
Brightened apace, for rest was earned.
He locked door long ere candle burned.

And whither went he? Ask himself,
Not me! To change of scene, I think.
Once sold the ware and pursed the pelf,
Chaffer was scarce his meat and drink,
Nor all his music — money-chink.

Because a man has shop to mind
In time and place, since flesh must live,
Needs spirit lack all life behind,
All stray thoughts, fancies fugitive,
All loves except what trade can give?

I want to know a butcher paints,
A baker rimes for his pursuit,
Candlestick-maker much acquaints
His soul with song, or, haply mute,
Blows out his brains upon the flute!

But — shop each day and all day long!
Friend, your good angel slept, your star
Suffered eclipse, fate did you wrong!
From where these sorts of treasures are,
There should our hearts be — Christ, how far!

(1876)

## PISGAH-SIGHTS

### 1

Over the ball of it,
Peering and prying,
How I see all of it,
Life there, outlying!
Roughness and smoothness,
Shine and defilement,
Grace and uncouthness:
One reconcilement.

Orbed as appointed,
Sister with brother
Joins, ne'er disjointed
One from the other.
All's lend-and-borrow;
Good, see, wants evil,
Joy demands sorrow,
Angel weds devil!

"Which things must — *why* be?"
Vain our endeavor!
So shall things aye be
As they were ever.
"Such things should *so* be!"
Sage our desistence!
Rough-smooth let globe be,
Mixed — man's existence!

Man — wise and foolish,
Lover and scorner,
Docile and mulish —
Keep each his corner!
Honey yet gall of it!
There's the life lying,
And I see all of it,
Only, I'm dying!

### 2

Could I but live again
Twice my life over,
Would I once strive again?
Would not I cover

---

84. **the Times,** the leading paper of London.

109-110. **where . . . hearts be.** Cf. *Matthew*, 6:21.—"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

*Pisgah-Sights.* Pisgah is the name of a mountain in Palestine from which Moses saw the Promised Land (*Deuteronomy*, 34:1-4).

Quietly all of it —
Greed and ambition —
So, from the pall of it,
Pass to fruition?

"Soft!" I'd say, "Soul mine!
Three-score and ten years,
Let the blind mole mine
Digging out deniers!
Let the dazed hawk soar,
Claim the sun's rights too!
Turf 'tis thy walk's o'er,
Foliage thy flight's to."

Only a learner,
Quick one or slow one,
Just a discerner,
I would teach no one.
I am earth's native. —
No rearranging it!
*I* be creative,
Chopping and changing it?

March, men, my fellows!
Those who, above me
(Distance so mellows),
Fancy you love me;
Those who, below me
(Distance makes great so),
Free to forego me,
Fancy you hate so!

Praising, reviling,
Worst head and best head,
Past me defiling,
Never arrested,
Wanters, abounders,
March, in gay mixture,
Men, my surrounders!
I am the fixture.

So shall I fear thee,
Mightiness yonder!
Mock-sun — more near thee,
What is to wonder?
So shall I love thee,
Down in the dark — lest
Glowworm I prove thee,
Star that now sparklest!

(1876)

## NATURAL MAGIC

All I can say is — I saw it!
The room was as bare as your hand.
I locked in the swarth little lady — I swear,
From the head to the foot of her — well, quite as bare!
"No Nautch shall cheat me," said I, "taking my stand
At this bolt which I draw!" And this bolt — I withdraw it,
And there laughs the lady, not bare, but embowered
With — who knows what verdure, o'erfruited, o'erflowered?
Impossible! Only — I saw it!

All I can sing is — I feel it!
This life was as blank as that room;
I let you pass in here. Precaution, indeed?
Walls, ceiling, and floor — not a chance for a weed!
Wide opens the entrance; where's cold now, where's gloom?
No May to sow seed here, no June to reveal it,
Behold you enshrined in these blooms of your bringing,
These fruits of your bearing — nay, birds of your winging!
A fairy-tale! Only — I feel it! (1876)

## MAGICAL NATURE

Flower — I never fancied; jewel — I profess you!
Bright I see and soft I feel the outside of a flower.
Save but glow inside and — jewel, I should guess you,
Dim to sight and rough to touch; the glory is the dower.

You, forsooth, a flower? Nay, my love, a jewel —
Jewel at no mercy of a moment in your prime!
Time may fray the flower-face; kind be time or cruel,
Jewel, from each facet, flash your laugh at time! (1876)

## APPEARANCES

And so you found that poor room dull,
Dark, hardly to your taste, my dear?
Its features seemed unbeautiful;
But this I know — 'twas there, not here,
You plighted troth to me, the word
Which — ask that poor room how it heard.

And this rich room obtains your praise
Unqualified — so bright, so fair,

---

44. **denier,** a small copper French coin of little value.

*Natural Magic.* 5. **Nautch,** an Indian dancing girl, to whom is ascribed the powers of a magician, as in producing a flowering tree out of nothing.

So all whereat perfection stays?
Aye, but remember — here, not there,
The other word was spoken! — Ask
This rich room how you dropped the mask!
(1876)

## PROLOGUE to LA SAISIAZ

Good, to forgive;
Best, to forget!
Living, we fret;
Dying, we live.
Fretless and free,
Soul, clap thy pinion!
Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee!

Wander at will,
Day after day —
Wander away,
Wandering still —
Soul that canst soar!
Body may slumber;
Body shall cumber
Soul-flight no more.

Waft of soul's wing!
What lies above?
Sunshine and Love,
Skyblue and Spring!
Body hides — where?
Ferns of all feather,
Mosses and heather,
Yours be the care!
(1878)

## PHEIDIPPIDES

*Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν*

First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor to all!
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in praise —
Aye, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and spear!
Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer,
Now, henceforth and forever — O latest to whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and flock!
Present to help, potent to save, Pan — patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return!
See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no specter that speaks!
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,
"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?" Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced; like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city. Two days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke; breath served but for "Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria — but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die — the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er destruction's brink?
How — when? No care for my limbs! — there's lightning in all and some —
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!"

O my Athens — Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice — each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood

---

*Prologue to La Saisiaz.* La Saisiaz, meaning *The Sun*, was the name of the villa near Geneva, Switzerland, where Browning stayed during the autumn of 1877 with his sister and a friend, Miss Ann Egerton-Smith. The sudden death of Miss Egerton-Smith called forth this poem, in which Browning discusses questions of death, God, the soul, and immortality.

*Pheidippides.* Pheidippides, the hero of this poem, was a Greek athlete who had been commissioned by Athens in 493 B.C. to run 140 miles to Sparta to ask for aid against the attacking Persians. The runner has returned and is reporting to the rulers of Athens. The story is from Book 6 of Herodotus, the famous Greek historian of the fourth century B.C.

The Greek legend means *Rejoice, we conquer.* These were the words spoken by Pheidippides (line 111) when he carried to Athens the report of the victory at Marathon in 490 B.C.

2. **dæmons,** guardian spirits of Greek families. 4. **Zeus,** chief of the Greek gods. **Her . . . spear,** Athena (Minerva), goddess of wisdom and warfare. The ægis was a shield.

5. **ye . . . buskin,** Artemis (Diana), goddess of the moon and of the chase. The buskin was a shoe laced about the ankle. 8. **Pan,** the god of all nature. He was thought by the Greeks to be half man and half goat, hence the goat-god (line 77). 9. **Archons,** rulers. They wore the golden grasshopper (tettix) to signify their right to their territory as descendants of earth-born possessors. The grasshopper was supposed to have sprung from the earth. 11. **myrtle,** often used in crowning heroes. 18. **water and earth.** To carry earth and water to an invading enemy was a symbol of submission. 20. **Hellas,** Greece.

Quivering — the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood:
"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athené, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them 'Ye must!'"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!
"Has Persia come — does Athens ask aid — may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast;
Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment suspend."

Athens — except for that sparkle — thy name, I had moldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back —
Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet "O gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay — I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave!
Rather I hail thee, Parnes — trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure? At least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across;
"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the fosse?
Athens to aid? Though the dive were through Erebos, thus I obey —
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!" — when — ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that are?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — majestical Pan!
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof;
All the great god was good in the eyes grave-kindly — the curl
Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
"Halt, Pheidippides!" — halt I did, my brain of a whirl.
"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious began;
"How is it — Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?
Aye, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The Goat-God saith:
When Persia — so much as strews not the soil — is cast in the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!'

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place, be the pledge!'"

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32. **Phoibos**, Phœbus Apollo, god of the sun. 33. **Olumpos**, Olympus, a mountain in Greece; the abode of the gods. 47. **filleted victim.** Animals for sacrifice were bedecked with ribbons. 49. **Oak and olive and bay.** These were sacred trees, the leaves and branches of which were often used in wreaths bestowed as prizes for victory or excellence. 52. **Parnes**, a mountain north of Athens.

61. **fosse**, ditch. 62. **Erebos**, the dark space between earth and Hades.

(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
— Fennel — I grasped it a-tremble with dew — whatever it bode.)
"While, as for thee" . . . But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto —
Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens — earth no more, the air was my road;
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

---

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed — what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway — Athens the mother demands of her son!"
Rosily blushed the youth; he paused; but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance — "Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow —
Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away forever; and then — no Athens to save —
Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave —
Hie to my house and home; and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees — recount how the god was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding him — so!"

---

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day;
So, when Persia was dust, all cried, "To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!
'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more; and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still "Rejoice!" — his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
So is Pheidippides happy forever — the noble strong man
Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be mute:
"Athens is saved!" — Pheidippides dies in the shout for his meed.

(1879)

## EPILOGUE TO *DRAMATIC IDYLS*

"Touch him ne'er so lightly, into song he broke;
Soil so quick-receptive — not one feather-seed,
Not one flower-dust fell but straight its fall awoke
Vitalizing virtue; song would song succeed
Sudden as spontaneous — prove a poet-soul!"
Indeed?
Rock's the song-soil rather, surface hard and bare;
Sun and dew their mildness, storm and frost their rage
Vainly both expend — few flowers awaken there;
Quiet in its cleft broods — what the after-age
Knows and names a pine, a nation's heritage.

---

Thus I wrote in London, musing on my betters,
Poets dead and gone; and lo, the critics cried,

---

83. **Fennel**, a prophecy that Pan would aid the Athenians at Marathon, which means *fennel*. 89. **Miltiades**, the Greek general who won the victory over the Persians at Marathon in 490 B.C. 106. **Akropolis**, the citadel of Athens.

*Epilogue to Dramatic Idyls.* The first ten lines of this poem were published as an epilogue to the second series of *Dramatic Idyls* in 1880; the remaining lines were added in an album of a young American girl in Venice later in the same year.

"Out on such a boast!" as if I dreamed that fetters
Binding Dante bind up — me! as if true pride
Were not also humble!
So I smiled and sighed
As I oped your book in Venice this bright morning,
Sweet new friend of mine! and felt the clay or sand,
Whatsoe'er my soil be, break — for praise or scorning —
Out in grateful fancies — weeds; but weeds expand
Almost into flowers, held by such a kindly hand. (1880)

## WANTING IS — WHAT?

Wanting is — what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
— Where is the blot?
Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
— Framework which waits for a picture to frame.
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with naught they embower!
Come then, complete incompletion, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!
Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love! (1883)

## ADAM, LILITH, AND EVE

One day, it thundered and lightened.
Two women, fairly frightened,
Sank to their knees, transformed, transfixed,
At the feet of the man who sat betwixt;
And "Mercy!" cried each — "if I tell the truth
Of a passage in my youth!"

Said This: "Do you mind the morning
I met your love with scorning?
As the worst of the venom left my lips,
I thought, 'If, despite this lie, he strips
The mask from my soul with a kiss — I crawl
His slave — soul, body, and all!' "

Said That: "We stood to be married;
The priest, or someone, tarried;
'If Paradise-door prove locked?' smiled you.
I thought, as I nodded, smiling too,
'Did one, that's away, arrive — nor late
Nor soon should unlock Hell's gate?' "

It ceased to lighten and thunder.
Up started both in wonder,
Looked round and saw that the sky was clear,
Then laughed, "Confess you believed us, Dear!"
"I saw through the joke!" the man replied.
They re-seated themselves beside. (1883)

## NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE

Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path — how soft to pace!
This May — what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?
In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,
With a malice that marks each word, each sign!
O enemy sly and serpentine,
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Through the magic of May to herself indeed!
Or narrow if needs the house must be,
Outside are the storms and strangers; we —
Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she —
I and she! (1883)

## WHY I AM A LIBERAL

"Why?" Because all I haply can and do,
All that I am now, all I hope to be —
Whence comes it save from fortune setting free
Body and soul the purpose to pursue,
God traced for both? If fetters not a few,
Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
These shall I bid men — each in his degree
Also God-guided — bear, and gayly, too?

But little do or can the best of us;
That little is achieved through Liberty.
Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,

---

*Wanting Is—What?* This poem stands as an introduction to a group of poems published in 1883 under the title of *Jocoseria*. The two following poems are from the same volume. Each poem in the collection shows the lack of something necessary to make human action or experience more nearly perfect. In this poem the spirit of love is invoked.

*Adam, Lilith, and Eve.* Lilith was the traditional first wife of Adam; she is reputed to have been the mother of demons.

*Why I Am a Liberal.* Compare *The Lost Leader*, page 204.

His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. That is "Why."
(1885)

## PROLOGUE TO *ASOLANDO*

"The Poet's age is sad; for why?
In youth, the natural world could show
No common object but his eye
At once involved with alien glow —
His own soul's iris-bow.

"And now a flower is just a flower;
Man, bird, beast are but beast, bird, man —
Simply themselves, uncinct by dower
Of dyes which, when life's day began,
Round each in glory ran."

Friend, did you need an optic glass,
Which were your choice? A lens to drape
In ruby, emerald, chrysopras,
Each object — or reveal its shape
Clear outlined, past escape,

The naked very thing? — so clear
That, when you had the chance to gaze,
You found its inmost self appear
Through outer seeming — truth ablaze,
Not falsehood's fancy-haze?

How many a year, my Asolo,
Since — one step just from sea to land —
I found you, loved yet feared you so —
For natural objects seemed to stand
Palpably fire-clothed! No —

No mastery of mine o'er these!
Terror with beauty, like the Bush
Burning but unconsumed. Bend knees,
Drop eyes to earthward! Language? Tush!
Silence 'tis awe decrees.

And now? The lambent flame is — where?
Lost from the naked world; earth, sky,
Hill, vale, tree, flower — Italia's rare
O'er-running beauty crowds the eye —
But flame? The Bush is bare.

Hill, vale, tree, flower — they stand distinct,
Nature to know and name. What then?
A Voice spoke thence which straight unlinked
Fancy from fact; see, all's in ken;
Has once my eyelid winked?

No, for the purged ear apprehends
Earth's import, not the eye late dazed.
The Voice said, "Call my works thy friends!
At Nature dost thou shrink amazed?
God is it who transcends."
(*1889;* 1889)

## DUBIETY

I will be happy if but for once;
Only help me, Autumn weather,
Me and my cares to screen, ensconce
In luxury's sofa-lap of leather!

Sleep? Nay, comfort — with just a cloud
Suffusing day too clear and bright;
Eve's essence, the single drop allowed
To sully, like milk, Noon's water-white.

Let gauziness shade, not shroud — adjust,
Dim, and not deaden — somehow sheathe
Aught sharp in the rough world's busy thrust,
If it reach me through dreaming's vapor-wreath.

Be life so, all things ever the same!
For, what has disarmed the world? Outside,
Quiet and peace; inside, nor blame
Nor want, nor wish whate'er betide.

What is it like that has happened before?
A dream? No dream, more real by much.
A vision? But fanciful days of yore
Brought many; mere musing seems not such.

Perhaps but a memory, after all!
— Of what came once when a woman leant
To feel for my brow where her kiss might fall.
Truth ever, truth only the excellent!
(1889)

## NOW

Out of your whole life give but a moment!
All of your life that has gone before,
All to come after it — so you ignore,
So you make perfect the present — condense,
In a rapture of rage, for perfection's endowment,
Thought and feeling and soul and sense —
Merged in a moment which gives me at last
You around me for once, you beneath me, above me —

---

*Prologue to Asolando.* The remaining poems of Browning in this volume were published in 1889 in a book entitled *Asolando: Fancies and Facts.* Browning had been living in Asolo, not far from Venice. He derives the title from *asolare,* meaning *to disport in the open air, to amuse oneself at random.* The book appeared on the day of Browning's death.

5. **iris-bow,** rainbow (so called from Iris, goddess of the rainbow). 13. **chrysopras,** a kind of apple-green onyx. 27-28. **the Bush . . . unconsumed,** a reference to an experience of Moses related in *Exodus,* 3:2.—"And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed."

Me — sure that despite of time future, time past —
This tick of our lifetime's one moment you love me!
How long such suspension may linger? Ah, Sweet —
The moment eternal — just that and no more —
When ecstasy's utmost we clutch at the core
While cheeks burn, arms open, eyes shut, and lips meet! (1889)

## HUMILITY

What girl but, having gathered flowers,
Stripped the beds and spoilt the bowers,
From the lapful light she carries
Drops a careless bud? — nor tarries
To regain the waif and stray:
"Store enough for home" — she'll say.

So say I too; give your lover
Heaps of loving — under, over,
Whelm him — make the one the wealthy!
Am I all so poor who — stealthy
Work it was! — picked up what fell:
Not the worst bud — who can tell?

(1889)

## POETICS

"So say the foolish!" Say the foolish so, Love?
"Flower she is, my rose" — or else, "My very swan is she" —
Or perhaps, "Yon maid-moon, blessing earth below, Love,
That art thou!" — to them, belike; no such vain words from me.

"Hush, rose, blush! no balm like breath," I chide it;
"Bend thy neck its best, swan — hers the whiter curve!"
Be the moon the moon; my Love I place beside it.
What is she? Her human self — no lower word will serve. (1889)

## SUMMUM BONUM

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee;
All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem;
In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea;
Breath and bloom, shade and shine — wonder, wealth, and — how far above them —
Truth, that's brighter than gem,
Trust, that's purer than pearl —
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe — all were for me
In the kiss of one girl.

(1889)

## A PEARL, A GIRL

A simple ring with a single stone,
To the vulgar eye no stone of price;
Whisper the right word, that alone —
Forth starts a sprite, like fire from ice,
And lo, you are lord (says an Eastern scroll)
Of heaven and earth, lord whole and sole
Through the power in a pearl.

A woman ('tis I this time that say)
With little the world counts worthy praise;
Utter the true word — out and away
Escapes her soul: I am wrapped in blaze,
Creation's lord, of heaven and earth
Lord whole and sole — by a minute's birth —
Through the love in a girl!

(1889)

## SPECULATIVE

Others may need new life in Heaven —
Man, Nature, Art — made new, assume!
Man with new mind old sense to leaven,
Nature — new light to clear old gloom,
Art that breaks bounds, gets soaring-room.

I shall pray: "Fugitive as precious —
Minutes which passed — return, remain!
Let earth's old life once more enmesh us,
You with old pleasure, me — old pain,
So we but meet nor part again!"

(1889)

## BAD DREAMS

Last night I saw you in my sleep;
And how your charm of face was changed!
I asked, "Some love, some faith you keep?"
You answered, "Faith gone, love estranged."

Whereat I woke — a twofold bliss:
Waking was one, but next there came
This other — "Though I felt, for this,
My heart break, I loved on the same."

(1889)

*Summum Bonum.* The title means *The Highest Good.*

## MUCKLE-MOUTH MEG

Frowned the Laird on the Lord: "So, red-handed I catch thee?
Death-doomed by our Law of the Border!
We've a gallows outside and a chiel to dispatch thee.
Who trespasses — hangs; all's in order."

He met frown with smile, did the young English gallant.
Then the Laird's dame: "Nay, Husband, I beg!
He's comely; be merciful! Grace for the callant —
If he marries our Muckle-mouth Meg!"

"No mile-wide-mouthed monster of yours do I marry;
Grant rather the gallows!" laughed he.
"Foul fare kith and kin of you — why do you tarry?"
"To tame your fierce temper!" quoth she.

"Shove him quick in the Hole, shut him fast for a week.
Cold, darkness, and hunger work wonders;
Who lion-like roars now, mouse-fashion will squeak,
And 'it rains' soon succeed to 'it thunders.'"

A week did he bide in the cold and the dark
— Not hunger; for duly at morning
In flitted a lass, and a voice like a lark
Chirped, "Muckle-mouth Meg still ye're scorning?

"Go hang, but here's parritch to hearten ye first!"
"Did Meg's muckle-mouth boast within some
Such music as yours, mine should match it or burst;
No frog-jaws! So tell folk, my Winsome!"

Soon week came to end, and, from Hole's door set wide,
Out he marched, and there waited the lassie.
"Yon gallows, or Muckle-mouth Meg for a bride!
Consider! Sky's blue and turf's grassy;

"Life's sweet; shall I say ye wed Muckle-mouth Meg?"
"Not I," quoth the stout heart; "too eerie
The mouth that can swallow a bubblyjock's egg;
Shall I let it munch mine? Never, Dearie!"

"Not Muckle-mouth Meg? Wow, the obstinate man!
Perhaps he would rather wed me!"
"Aye, would he — with just for a dowry your can!"
"I'm Muckle-mouth Meg," chirruped she.

"Then so — so — so — so —" as he kissed her apace —
"Will I widen thee out till thou turnest
From Margaret Minnikin-mou', by God's grace,
To Muckle-mouth Meg in good earnest!"

(1889)

## DEVELOPMENT

My father was a scholar and knew Greek.
When I was five years old, I asked him once,
"What do you read about?"
"The siege of Troy."
"What is a siege, and what is Troy?"
Whereat
He piled up chairs and tables for a town,
Set me a-top for Priam, called our cat —
Helen, enticed away from home (he said)
By wicked Paris, who couched somewhere close
Under the footstool, being cowardly,
But whom — since she was worth the pains, poor puss —
Towzer and Tray — our dogs, the Atreidai — sought
By taking Troy to get possession of
— Always when great Achilles ceased to sulk
(My pony in the stable) — forth would prance
And put to flight Hector — our page-boy's self.
This taught me who was who and what was what.
So far I rightly understood the case
At five years old; a huge delight it proved

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*Muckle-Mouth Meg.* The title means *Big-mouthed Margaret.* See Critical Notes.
3. **chiel,** young fellow. 7. **callant,** fine fellow. 21. **parritch,** porridge.

31. **bubblyjock's,** turkey's. 39. **Minnikin-mou',** small-mouthed.

*Development.* This poem is autobiographical; it tells how Browning was taught by his father, a man of exceptional powers—a poet and a scholar, whose mind was "a storehouse of literary and philosophical antiquities."
3. **The siege of Troy,** the theme of Homer's *Iliad.* Priam was king of Troy; Paris and Hector were his sons. Helen was the most beautiful woman in Greece and the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. Menelaus and Agamemnon, the general of the Greek army, were the Atreidai—sons of Atreus. Paris carried off Helen and thus precipitated the war. Achilles (line 13), the hero of the poem, was a Greek. Becoming angry when he was deprived of Briseis, a beautiful captive maiden, by Agamemnon, he sulked in his tent and withdrew from the war. Later he returned to avenge the death of his friend Patroclus (line 82) at the hands of Hector. Achilles, who killed Hector and dragged his body around the walls of Troy, was finally killed by Paris.

And still proves — thanks to that instructor sage,
My father, who knew better than turn straight
Learning's full flare on weak-eyed ignorance,
Or, worse yet, leave weak eyes to grow sand-blind,
Content with darkness and vacuity.

It happened, two or three years afterward,
That — I and playmates playing at Troy's Siege —
My father came upon our make-believe.
"How would you like to read yourself the tale
Properly told, of which I gave you first
Merely such notion as a boy could bear?
Pope, now, would give you the precise account
Of what, some day, by dint of scholarship,
You'll hear — who knows? — from Homer's very mouth.
Learn Greek by all means, read the 'Blind Old Man,
Sweetest of Singers' — *tuphlos* which means 'blind,'
*Hedistos* which means 'sweetest.' Time enough!
Try, anyhow, to master him some day;
Until when, take what serves for substitute,
Read Pope, by all means!"
So I ran through Pope,
Enjoyed the tale — what history so true?
Also attacked my Primer, duly drudged,
Grew fitter thus for what was promised next —
The very thing itself, the actual words,
When I could turn — say, Buttmann to account.

Time passed, I ripened somewhat; one fine day,
"Quite ready for the Iliad, nothing less?
There's Heine, where the big books block the shelf;
Don't skip a word, thumb well the Lexicon!"

I thumbed well and skipped nowise till I learned
Who was who, what was what, from Homer's tongue,
And there an end of learning. Had you asked
The all-accomplished scholar, twelve years old,
"Who was it wrote the Iliad?" — what a laugh!
"Why, Homer, all the world knows. Of his life
Doubtless some facts exist; it's everywhere.
We have not settled, though, his place of birth;
He begged, for certain, and was blind beside;
Seven cities claimed him — Scio, with best right,
Thinks Byron. What he wrote? Those Hymns we have.
Then there's the 'Battle of the Frogs and Mice,'
That's all — unless they dig 'Margites' up
(I'd like that), nothing more remains to know."

Thus did youth spend a comfortable time;
Until — "What's this the Germans say in fact
That Wolf found out first? It's unpleasant work
Their chop and change, unsettling one's belief;
All the same, where we live, we learn, that's sure."
So, I bent brow o'er *Prolegomena*.
And after Wolf, a dozen of his like
Proved there was never any Troy at all,
Neither Besiegers nor Besieged — nay, worse —
No actual Homer, no authentic text,
No warrant for the fiction I, as fact,
Had treasured in my heart and soul so long —
Aye, mark you! and as fact held still, still hold,
Spite of new knowledge, in my heart of hearts
And soul of souls, fact's essence freed and fixed
From accidental fancy's guardian sheath.
Assuredly thenceforward — thank my stars! —
However it got there, deprive who could —
Wring from the shrine my precious tenantry,
Helen, Ulysses, Hector and his Spouse,
Achilles and his Friend? — though Wolf — ah, Wolf!
Why must he needs come doubting, spoil a dream?

But then, "No dream's worth waking" — Browning says;
And here's the reason why I tell thus much.
I, now mature man, you anticipate,
May blame my father justifiably

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22. **sand-blind,** weak-sighted. 30. **Pope.** Alexander Pope (1688-1744) published an English translation of the *Iliad* in 1720 and of the *Odyssey* in 1725. 40. **Primer,** the first book in Greek. 43. **Buttmann,** Philipp Karl Buttmann (1764-1829), a German scholar, famous for his studies in Greek grammar. 46. **Heine,** Christian Gottlob Heyne (1729-1812), a German philologist who edited the *Iliad*.

57. **Seven cities.** The seven cities were Chios (Scio), Colophon, Smyrna, Rhodes, Athens, Argos, and Salamis. These are all located in the region of Greece and Asia Minor. 58. **Hymns.** These were hymns to the gods, called *Homeric Hymns* but actually composed by various authors after the death of Homer. 59. **Battle . . . Mice.** This is a mock epic poem attributed to Homer. 60. **Margites,** a humorous poem no longer ascribed to Homer. 64. **Wolf,** Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1842), a German scholar who advanced the theory in his *Prolegomena in Homerum* (1795), that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not the work of one man but the compilation of various writers' songs handed down through a long period of oral tradition. 81. **Ulysses,** one of the Greek heroes in the Trojan War. **his Spouse.** The wife of Hector was Andromache.

For letting me dream out my nonage thus,
And only by such slow and sure degrees
Permitting me to sift the grain from chaff,
Get truth and falsehood known and named as such.
Why did he ever let me dream at all,
Not bid me taste the story in its strength?
Suppose my childhood was scarce qualified
To rightly understand mythology;
Silence at least was in his power to keep.
I might have—somehow—correspondingly—
Well, who knows by what method, gained my gains,
Been taught, by forthrights not meanderings,
My aim should be to loathe, like Peleus' son,
A lie as Hell's Gate, love my wedded wife,
Like Hector, and so on with all the rest.
Could not I have excogitated this
Without believing such man really were?
That is — he might have put into my hand
The "Ethics"? In translation, if you please,
Exact, no pretty lying that improves,
To suit the modern taste: no more, no less —
The "Ethics." 'Tis a treatise I find hard
To read aright now that my hair is gray,
And I can manage the original.
At five years old — how ill had fared its leaves!
Now, growing double o'er the Stagirite,
At least I soil no page with bread and milk,
Nor crumple, dogs-ear and deface — boys' way.
(1889)

## EPILOGUE TO *ASOLANDO*

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where — by death, fools think, imprisoned —
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
— Pity me?

Oh, to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel —
Being — who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No! At noonday, in the bustle of man's work-time,
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry, "Speed — fight on, fare ever
There as here!" (1889)

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING
## (1806-1861)

### CONSOLATION

All are not taken; there are left behind
Living Belovéds, tender looks to bring
And make the daylight still a happy thing,
And tender voices, to make soft the wind.
But if it were not so — if I could find
No love in all the world for comforting,
Nor any path but hollowly did ring
Where "dust to dust" the love from life disjoined,
And if, before those sepulchers unmoving
I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth),
Crying, "Where are ye, O my loved and loving?" —
I know a Voice would sound, "Daughter, I AM.
Can I suffice for HEAVEN and not for earth?"
(1838)

### COWPER'S GRAVE

It is a place where poets crowned may feel the heart's decaying;
It is a place where happy saints may weep amid their praying.

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100. **Peleus' son,** Achilles, who considered the action of Agamemnon regarding Briseis as a breach of faith. (See note on line 3.) 101-102. **wedded . . . Hector.** See Hector's famous farewell to his wife, Andromache, in Book 6 of the *Iliad*, 486 ff. 103. **excogitated,** thought out. 106. **The "Ethics,"** the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the great work of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), the famous Greek philosopher. 113. **the Stagirite,** Aristotle, so called because he was born at Stagira, an ancient city of Chalcidice, a peninsula of northeastern Greece.

*Epilogue to Asolando.* This is Browning's last poem. It should be compared with Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, page 166.

*Cowper's Grave.* William Cowper (1731-1800) is buried in Dereham Church, Norfolk, England. Throughout his life he suffered from attacks of melancholy which at times led to actual insanity. He often saw himself as one forsaken by God. His poetry includes a number of hymns and passages that show a sympathetic interest in nature, in man, and in animals and birds. He was especially fond of hares (see line 25), and kept some as pets.

Yet let the grief and humbleness, as low as silence, languish;
Earth surely now may give her calm to whom she gave her anguish.

O poets, from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing!
O Christians, at your cross of hope, a hopeless hand was clinging!
O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,
Groaned inly while he taught you peace, and died while ye were smiling!

And now, what time ye all may read through dimming tears his story,
How discord on the music fell and darkness on the glory,
And how when, one by one, sweet sounds and wandering lights departed,
He wore no less a loving face because so broken-hearted,

He shall be strong to sanctify the poet's high vocation,
And bow the meekest Christian down in meeker adoration;
Nor ever shall he be, in praise, by wise or good forsaken,
Named softly as the household name of one whom God hath taken.

With quiet sadness and no gloom I learn to think upon him,
With meekness that is gratefulness to God whose heaven hath won him,
Who suffered once the madness-cloud to his own love to blind him,
But gently led the blind along where breath and bird could find him;

And wrought within his shattered brain such quick poetic senses
As hills have language for, and stars, harmonious influences.
The pulse of dew upon the grass kept his within its number,
And silent shadows from the trees refreshed him like a slumber.

Wild timid hares were drawn from woods to share his home-caresses,
Uplooking to his human eyes with sylvan tendernesses;
The very world, by God's constraint, from falsehood's ways removing,
Its women and its men became, beside him, true and loving.

And though, in blindness, he remained unconscious of that guiding,
And things provided came without the sweet sense of providing,
He testified this solemn truth, while frenzy desolated —
Nor man nor nature satisfies whom only God created.

Like a sick child that knoweth not his mother while she blesses
And drops upon his burning brow the coolness of her kisses —
That turns his fevered eyes around — "My mother! where's my mother?" —
As if such tender words and deeds could come from any other! —

The fever gone, with leaps of heart he sees her bending o'er him,
Her face all pale from watchful love, the unweary love she bore him!
Thus woke the poet from the dream his life's long fever gave him,
Beneath those deep pathetic Eyes which closed in death to save him.

Thus? Oh, not *thus!* No type of earth can image that awaking,
Wherein he scarcely heard the chant of seraphs, round him breaking,
Or felt the new immortal throb of soul from body parted,
But felt those eyes alone, and knew — "*My* Savior! *not* deserted!"

Deserted! Who hath dreamt that when the cross in darkness rested,
Upon the Victim's hidden face no love was manifested?
What frantic hands outstretched have e'er the atoning drops averted?
What tears have washed them from the soul, that *one* should be deserted?

Deserted! God could separate from his own essence rather;
And Adam's sins *have* swept between the righteous Son and Father.
Yea, once, Immanuel's orphaned cry his universe hath shaken —
It went up single, echoless, "My God, I am forsaken!"

It went up from the Holy's lips amid his lost creation,

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33-38. **Like . . . him.** See Cowper's *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture out of Norfolk.* 51. **Immanuel,** an appellation of Christ (*Matthew,* 1:23). 52. **"My God, I am forsaken!"** Cf. Christ's words from the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (*Matthew,* 27:46.)

That, of the lost, no son should use those words of desolation!
That Earth's worst frenzies, marring hope, should mar not hope's fruition,
And I, on Cowper's grave, should see his rapture in a vision. (1838)

## THE CRY OF THE HUMAN

"There is no God," the foolish saith,
But none "There is no sorrow";
And nature oft the cry of faith
In bitter need will borrow.
Eyes, which the preacher could not school,
By wayside graves are raiséd,
And lips say, "God be pitiful,"
Who ne'er said, "God be praiséd."
Be pitiful, O God!

The tempest stretches from the steep
The shadow of its coming,
The beasts grow tame and near us creep,
As help were in the human;
Yet, while the cloud-wheels roll and grind,
We spirits tremble under —
The hills have echoes, but we find
No answer for the thunder.
Be pitiful, O God!

The battle hurtles on the plains,
Earth feels new scythes upon her;
We reap our brothers for the wains,
And call the harvest — honor:
Draw face to face, front line to line,
One image all inherit —
Then kill, curse on, by that same sign,
Clay — clay, and spirit — spirit.
Be pitiful, O God!

The plague runs festering through the town,
And never a bell is tolling,
And corpses, jostled 'neath the moon,
Nod to the dead-cart's rolling;
The young child calleth for the cup,
The strong man brings it weeping,
The mother from her babe looks up,
And shrieks away its sleeping.
Be pitiful, O God!

The plague of gold strikes far and near,
And deep and strong it enters;
This purple chimar which we wear
Makes madder than the centaur's.
Our thoughts grow blank, our words grow strange,
We cheer the pale gold-diggers,
Each soul is worth so much on 'Change,
And marked, like sheep, with figures.
Be pitiful, O God!

The curse of gold upon the land
The lack of bread enforces;
The rail-cars snort from strand to strand,
Like more of Death's White Horses.
The rich preach "rights" and "future days,"
And hear no angel scoffing;
The poor die mute, with starving gaze
On corn-ships in the offing.
Be pitiful, O God!

We meet together at the feast,
To private mirth betake us;
We stare down in the winecup, lest
Some vacant chair should shake us.
We name delight, and pledge it round —
"It shall be ours tomorrow!"
God's seraphs, do your voices sound
As sad, in naming sorrow?
Be pitiful, O God!

We sit together, with the skies,
The steadfast skies, above us,
We look into each other's eyes,
"And how long will you love us?"
The eyes grow dim with prophecy,
The voices, low and breathless —
"Till death us part!" — O words, to be
Our *best*, for love the deathless!
Be pitiful, O God!

We tremble by the harmless bed
Of one loved and departed;
Our tears drop on the lips that said
Last night, "Be stronger-hearted!"
O God — to clasp those fingers close,
And yet to feel so lonely!
To see a light upon such brows,
Which is the daylight only!
Be pitiful, O God!

The happy children come to us
And look up in our faces;

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*The Cry of the Human.* 1. **"There is no God."** From *Psalms*, 14:1.—"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." 21. **wains,** wagons. 39. **chimar,** robe. 40. **centaur's.** Because Nessus the centaur made love to Hercules's wife, Dejanira, Hercules shot him with a poisoned arrow. In obedience to the dying advice of Nessus, Dejanira steeped her husband's shirt in the blood of the centaur as a love charm; but it poisoned Hercules, who, after venting his anger upon the messenger who brought the garment, gave himself up to die.

43. **'Change,** Exchange, the financial center of London. 48. **rail-cars.** Railway trains were first introduced into England in 1823, and for more than twenty years they were regarded as very dangerous. 49. **Death's White Horses.** In Scandinavian mythology the white horse is regarded as an omen of death. The fourth beast of the Apocalypse (*Revelation*, 6:8) was "a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death . . ." 50. **"rights" and "future days,"** slogans of the members of the new capitalistic group, who protested against innovations and reforms, held out for the private exercise of property rights, and regarded the accumulation of wealth for the future as a guarantee of public welfare. 53. **corn-ships,** wheat-ships. Much suffering was occasioned among the lower classes because of the Corn Laws, which prohibited or greatly restricted the importation of grain. The laws were repealed in 1846.

They ask us, "Was it thus, and thus,
When we were in their places?"
We cannot speak — we see anew
The hills we used to live in,
And feel our mother's smile press through
The kisses she is giving.
Be pitiful, O God!

We pray together at the kirk
For mercy, mercy solely;
Hands weary with the evil work,
We lift them to the Holy.
The corpse is calm below our knee,
Its spirit, bright before Thee;
Between them, worse than either, we —
Without the rest or glory.
Be pitiful, O God!

We leave the communing of men,
The murmur of the passions,
And live alone, to live again
With endless generations;
Are we so brave? The sea and sky
In silence lift their mirrors,
And, glassed therein, our spirits high
Recoil from their own terrors.
Be pitiful, O God!

We sit on hills our childhood wist,
Woods, hamlets, streams, beholding
The sun strikes through the farthest mist
The city's spire to golden;
The city's golden spire it was,
When hope and health were strongest,
But now it is the churchyard grass
We look upon the longest.
Be pitiful, O God!

And soon all vision waxeth dull;
Men whisper, "He is dying";
We cry no more, "Be pitiful!"
We have no strength for crying —
No strength, no need. Then, soul of mine,
Look up and triumph rather!
Lo, in the depth of God's Divine,
The Son adjures the Father,
BE PITIFUL, O GOD!
(1842)

## THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west —
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his tomorrow
Which is lost in Long Ago;
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost.
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy;
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak;
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary —
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,
For the outside earth is cold,
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year; her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her;
Was no room for any work in the close clay!
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries;

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109. **wist**, knew.

*The Cry of the Children.* This poem was suggested by an official report on the employment of children in mines and factories. The poem is a product of the humanitarian movement of the period. In reply to a complaint against the rhythm of the poem, Mrs. Browning said, "The first stanza came into my head in a hurricane, and I was obliged to make the other stanzas like it."

40. **rime**, hoarfrost.

Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes;
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime.
It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

Alas, alas, the children! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have;
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty.
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For, oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
Through the coal-dark, underground;
Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

"For all day the wheels are droning, turning;
Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places:
Turns the sky in the high window, blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling;
All are turning, all the day — and we with all.
And all day the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
'O ye wheels' (breaking out in a mad moaning),
'Stop! be silent for today!'"

Aye, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth!
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth!
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals;
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray;
So the blessèd One who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, "Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door;
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,
Hears our weeping any more?

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,
'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words except 'Our Father,'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within his right hand, which is strong.
'Our Father!' If He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
'Come and rest with me, my child.'

"But, no!" say the children, weeping faster,
"He is speechless as a stone;

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56. **cerement,** grave-cloth.

And they tell us, of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to!" say the children — "up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us; grief has made us unbelieving:
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."
Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by his world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you!
They are weary ere they run;
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm —
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm,
Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly
The harvest of its memories cannot reap —
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep! let them weep!

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity.
"How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart —
Stifle down with a mailéd heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path!
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."
(1843)

## GRIEF

I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless;
That only men incredulous of despair,
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air
Beat upward to God's throne in loud access
Of shrieking and reproach. Full desertness,
In souls as countries, lieth silent-bare
Under the blanching, vertical eye-glare
Of the absolute Heavens. Deep-hearted man, express
Grief for thy Dead in silence like to death —
Most like a monumental statue set
In everlasting watch and moveless woe
Till itself crumble to the dust beneath.
Touch it; the marble eyelids are not wet:
If it could weep, it could arise and go. (1844)

## CHEERFULNESS TAUGHT BY REASON

I think we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon gray blank of sky, we might grow faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls; but since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop,
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous Heart, be comforted
And, like a cheerful traveler, take the road,
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? At least it may be said
"Because the way is *short*, I thank thee, God." (1844)

## THE DEAD PAN

Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan is dead.

In what revels are ye sunken
In old Æthiopia?
Have the Pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora
Your divine pale lips that shiver
Like the lotus in the river?
Pan, Pan is dead.

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144. **palm**, palm branch, the symbol of victory, the prize.

*The Dead Pan.* Pan was the Greek god of pastures, flocks, and forests. He was part man and part goat. He was fond of music and invented the shepherd's flute. (See *A Musical Instrument*, page 376.) Mrs. Browning states that this poem was "excited by Schiller's *Götter Griechenlands* and partly founded on a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch (*De Oraculorum Defectu*), according to which, at the hour of the Savior's agony, a cry of 'Great Pan is dead!' swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners—and the oracles ceased." Compare Milton's *Lycidas*.

1. **Hellas**, ancient Greece. 9. **Æthiopia**, a country in northern Africa. 10. **Pygmies**, according to Greek legend, a race of dwarfs that lived on the banks of the Upper Nile. 11. **mandragora**, a narcotic herb, the subject of many superstitions. 13. **lotus**, the Egyptian water lily.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number
Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine,
And so kept alive and fine?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corses
Where the silver spheres roll on,
Stung to life by centric forces
Thrown like rays out from the sun? —
While the smoke of your old altars
Is the shroud that round you welters?
Great Pan is dead.

"Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,"
Said the old Hellenic tongue —
Said the hero-oaths, as well as
Poets' songs the sweetest sung —
Have ye grown deaf in a day?
Can ye speak not yea or nay,
Since Pan is dead?

Do ye leave your rivers flowing
All alone, O Naiades,
While your drenchéd locks dry slow in
This cold feeble sun and breeze?
Not a word the Naiads say,
Though the rivers run for aye;
For Pan is dead.

From the gloaming of the oak-wood,
O ye Dryads, could ye flee?
At the rushing thunderstroke, would
No sob tremble through the tree?
Not a word the Dryads say,
Though the forests wave for aye;
For Pan is dead.

Have ye left the mountain places,
Oreads wild, for other tryst?
Shall we see no sudden faces
Strike a glory through the mist?
Not a sound the silence thrills
Of the everlasting hills;
Pan, Pan is dead.

O twelve gods of Plato's vision,
Crowned to starry wanderings,
With your chariots in procession
And your silver clash of wings!
Very pale ye seem to rise,
Ghosts of Grecian deities,
Now Pan is dead!

Jove, that right hand is unloaded
Whence the thunder did prevail,
While in idiocy of godhead
Thou art staring the stars pale!
And thine eagle, blind and old,
Roughs his feathers in the cold.
Pan, Pan is dead.

Where, O Juno, is the glory
Of thy regal look and tread?
Will they lay, for evermore, thee
On thy dim, strait, golden bed?
Will thy queendom all lie hid
Meekly under either lid?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Ha, Apollo! floats his golden
Hair all mist-like where he stands,
While the Muses hang enfolding
Knee and foot with faint wild hands?
'Neath the clanging of thy bow,
Niobe looked lost as thou!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Shall the casque with its brown iron
Pallas' broad blue eyes eclipse,
And no hero take inspiring
From the god-Greek of her lips?
'Neath her olive dost thou sit,
Mars the mighty, cursing it?
Pan, Pan is dead.

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther
He swoons, bound with his own vines;
And his Mænads slowly saunter,
Head aside, among the pines,
While they murmur dreamingly,
"Evohe! — ah — evohe! —
Ah, Pan is dead!"

Neptune lies beside the trident,
Dull and senseless as a stone;
And old Pluto deaf and silent
Is cast out into the sun;

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22. **corses**, bodies. 23. **silver spheres.** According to the Ptolemaic system of astrology, nine spheres, containing the sun, the moon, and the stars, revolved around the earth, which was stationary. As they revolved, the spheres produced music. 24. **centric**, central. 37. **Naiades**, water nymphs. 44. **Dryads**, wood nymphs. 51. **Oreads**, mountain nymphs. 57. **Plato's vision**, etc., a reference to Plato's *Phædrus*, Sec. 247 (Jowett's translation): "Zeus, the mighty lord, holding the reins of a winged chariot, leads the way in heaven, ordering all and caring for all; and there follows him the heavenly array of gods and demi-gods, divided into eleven bands; for only Hestia is left at home in the house of heaven; but the rest of the twelve greater deities march in their appointed order."

64. **Jove**, Zeus, the chief god of the Greeks. The eagle was his attendant bird. 71. **Juno**, queen of the gods. 78. **Apollo**, the god of youth and beauty, of poetry and music. His attributes were the bow and the lyre. 80. **Muses**, the nine daughters of Jove, goddesses of poetry, art, music, etc. 83. **Niobe.** See note on line 102, page 226. 86. **Pallas**, Athene, or Minerva, goddess of wisdom and war. The olive tree was sacred to her. 90. **Mars**, god of war. 92. **Bacchus**, god of wine. His forehead was crowned with vine-leaves or ivy. He frequently rode upon a panther or a tiger and was attended by the Mænads (l. 94), women who, as they danced and sang, waved a staff entwined with ivy and surmounted by a pine cone. 97. **Evohe**, the cry of the devotees of Bacchus; usually a shout of joy. 99. **Neptune**, god of the sea. He carried a trident, a three-pronged spear. 101. **Pluto**, god of the lower world.

Ceres smileth stern thereat,
"We *all* now are desolate —
Now Pan is dead."

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam thou art;
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thine heart!
*Ai Adonis!* at that shriek
Not a tear runs down her cheek —
Pan, Pan is dead.

And the Loves, we used to know from
One another, huddled lie,
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,
Close beside her tenderly;
As if each had weakly tried
Once to kiss her as he died.
Pan, Pan is dead.

What, and Hermes? Time enthralleth
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus,
And the ivy blindly crawleth
Round thy brave caduceus?
Hast thou no new message for us,
Full of thunder and Jove-glories?
Nay, Pan is dead.

Crownéd Cybele's great turret
Rocks and crumbles on her head;
Roar the lions of her chariot
Toward the wilderness, unfed;
Scornful children are not mute —
"Mother, mother, walk afoot,
Since Pan is dead!"

In the fiery-hearted center
Of the solemn universe,
Ancient Vesta — who could enter
To consume thee with this curse?
Drop thy gray chin on thy knee,
O thou palsied Mystery!
For Pan is dead.

Gods, we vainly do adjure you —
Ye return nor voice nor sign!
Not a votary could secure you
Even a grave for your Divine;
Not a grave, to show thereby
*Here these gray old gods do lie.*
Pan, Pan is dead.

Even that Greece who took your wages
Calls the obolus outworn;
And the hoarse, deep-throated ages
Laugh your godships unto scorn;
And the poets do disclaim you,
Or grow colder if they name you —
And Pan is dead.

Gods bereavéd, gods belated,
With your purples rent asunder!
Gods discrownéd and desecrated,
Disinherited of thunder!
Now, the goats may climb and crop
The soft grass on Ida's top —
Now Pan is dead.

Calm, of old, the bark went onward,
When a cry more loud than wind
Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward
From the piléd Dark behind;
And the sun shrank and grew pale,
Breathed against by the great wail —
"Pan, Pan is dead."

And the rowers from the benches
Fell, each shuddering on his face,
While departing Influences
Struck a cold back through the place;
And the shadow of the ship
Reeled along the passive deep —
"Pan, Pan is dead."

And that dismal cry rose slowly
And sank slowly through the air,
Full of spirit's melancholy
And eternity's despair!
And they heard the words it said —
PAN IS DEAD — GREAT PAN IS DEAD —
PAN, PAN IS DEAD.

'Twas the hour when One in Sion
Hung for love's sake on a cross;
When his brow was chill with dying
And his soul was faint with loss;
When his priestly blood dropped downward,
And his kingly eyes looked throneward —
Then, Pan was dead.

By the love, He stood alone in,
His sole Godhead rose complete,
And the false gods fell down moaning

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103. **Ceres,** goddess of the harvest. 106. **Aphrodite,** Venus, goddess of love and beauty. She was worshiped also as goddess of the sea; according to one tradition she was born of the foam of the sea. Her girdle, or cestus (l. 108), had the power of exciting the wearer to love. 110. **Ai Adonis,** a cry of woe—*alas, Adonis.* Adonis was the beautiful youth loved by Venus. 115. **frore,** frozen. 120. **Hermes,** Mercury, the messenger of the gods. He carried a wand, the caduceus (l. 123), entwined with ivy. 127. **Cybele,** Rhea, the mother of the gods. She wore a turreted crown and rode in a chariot drawn by lions. 136. **Vesta,** the goddess of the hearth. She was the eldest sister of Jupiter and mysteriously elected to remain single. In the center of her temple at Rome a fire was kept burning by her six virgin priestesses.

149. **obolus,** a small Greek coin. 160. **Ida's top,** Mt. Ida, in Crete, the birthplace of Zeus. 162-181. **Calm . . . dead.** These lines refer to Plutarch's story (see introductory note). 165. **piléd Dark,** the piled up, or heavy, darkness at the time of the Crucifixion.

Each from off his golden seat;
All the false gods with a cry
Rendered up their deity —
Pan, Pan was dead.

Wailing wide across the islands,
They rent, vest-like, their Divine;
And a darkness and a silence
Quenched the light of every shrine;
And Dodona's oak swang lonely
Henceforth, to the tempest only;
Pan, Pan was dead.

Pythia staggered, feeling o'er her
Her lost god's forsaking look;
Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror,
And her crispy fillets shook,
And her lips gasped, through their foam,
For a word that did not come.
Pan, Pan was dead.

O ye vain false gods of Hellas,
Ye are silent evermore!
And I dash down this old chalice
Whence libations ran of yore.
See, the wine crawls in the dust
Wormlike — as your glories must,
Since Pan is dead.

Get to dust, as common mortals,
By a common doom and track!
Let no Schiller from the portals
Of that Hades call you back,
Or instruct us to weep all
At your antique funeral.
Pan, Pan is dead.

By your beauty, which confesses
Some chief Beauty conquering you —
By our grand heroic guesses
Through your falsehood at the True —
We will weep *not!* earth shall roll
Heir to each god's aureole —
And Pan is dead.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
Sung beside her in her youth,
And those debonair romances
Sound but dull beside the truth.
Phœbus' chariot-course is run;
Look up, poets, to the sun!
Pan, Pan is dead.

Christ hath sent us down the angels;
And the whole earth and the skies
Are illumed by altar-candles
Lit for blessèd mysteries;
And a Priest's hand through creation
Waveth calm and consecration.
And Pan is dead.

Truth is fair; should we forgo it?
Can we sigh right for a wrong?
God Himself is the best Poet,
And the Real is his song.
Sing his truth out fair and full,
And secure his beautiful!
Let Pan be dead!

Truth is large; our aspiration
Scarce embraces half we be.
Shame, to stand in his creation
And doubt truth's sufficiency! —
To think God's song unexcelling
The poor tales of our own telling —
When Pan is dead!

What is true and just and honest,
What is lovely, what is pure,
All of praise that hath admonisht,
All of virtue — shall endure;
These are themes for poets' uses,
Stirring nobler than the Muses,
Ere Pan was dead.

O brave poets, keep back nothing,
Nor mix falsehood with the whole!
Look up Godward; speak the truth in
Worthy song from earnest soul;
Hold, in high poetic duty,
Truest Truth the fairest Beauty!
Pan, Pan is dead.
(1844)

## SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

### I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young;
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,

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201. **Dodona**, the seat of the oracle of Zeus in Epirus. The responses were given by the rustling of the leaves of the sacred oak tree. 204. **Pythia**, the priestess of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. 207. **crispy fillets**, curly hair. 220. **Schiller**. In his poem *The Gods of Greece* Schiller suggests that with the death of the gods poetry and art and beauty perished. Mrs. Browning says, "It is in all veneration to the memory of the deathless Schiller that I oppose a doctrine still more dishonoring to poetry than to Christianity." 230. **aureole**, a kind of luminous halo. 236. **Phœbus' chariot-course**. Phœbus Apollo, the god of the sun, drove westerly all day in a flaming chariot.

260-263. **What is true . . . virtue**. Based on *Philippians*, 4:8.—"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." 272. **Truth . . . Beauty**. Cf. Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, 49: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."

*Sonnets from the Portuguese*. See Critical Notes.

*Sonnet I*. 1. **Theocritus**, a famous Greek pastoral poet of the third century B.C. See *Idylls*, 15, 1044 ff.

I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
"Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death," I said. But, there,
The silver answer rang,—"Not Death, but Love."

### 2

But only three in all God's universe
Have heard this word thou hast said,—Himself, beside
Thee speaking, and me listening! and replied
One of us . . . *that* was God, . . . and laid the curse
So darkly on my eyelids, as to amerce
My sight from seeing thee,—that if I had died,
The deathweights, placed there, would have signified
Less absolute exclusion. "Nay" is worse
From God than from all others, O my friend!
Men could not part us with their worldly jars,
Nor the seas change us, nor the tempests bend;
Our hands would touch for all the mountain-bars:
And, heaven being rolled between us at the end,
We should but vow the faster for the stars.

### 3

Unlike are we, unlike, O princely Heart!
Unlike our uses and our destinies.
Our ministering two angels look surprise
On one another, as they strike athwart
Their wings in passing. Thou, bethink thee, art
A guest for queens to social pageantries,
With gages from a hundred brighter eyes
Than tears even can make mine, to play thy part
Of chief musician. What hast *thou* to do
With looking from the lattice-lights at me,
A poor, tired, wandering singer, singing through
The dark, and leaning up a cypress tree?
The chrism is on thine head,—on mine, the dew,—
And Death must dig the level where these agree.

### 4

Thou hast thy calling to some palace-floor,
Most gracious singer of high poems! where
The dancers will break footing, from the care
Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.
And dost thou lift this house's latch too poor
For hand of thine? and canst thou think and bear
To let thy music drop here unaware
In folds of golden fullness at my door?
Look up and see the casement broken in,
The bats and owlets builders in the roof!
My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.
Hush, call no echo up in further proof
Of desolation! there's a voice within
That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof.

### 5

I lift my heavy heart up solemnly,
As once Electra her sepulchral urn,
And, looking in thine eyes, I overturn
The ashes at thy feet. Behold and see
What a great heap of grief lay hid in me,
And how the red wild sparkles dimly burn
Through the ashen grayness. If thy foot in scorn
Could tread them out to darkness utterly,
It might be well perhaps. But if instead
Thou wait beside me for the wind to blow
The gray dust up, . . . those laurels on thine head,
O my Belovéd, will not shield thee so,
That none of all the fires shall scorch and shred
The hair beneath. Stand farther off then! go.

### 6

Go from me. Yet I feel that I shall stand
Henceforward in thy shadow. Nevermore
Alone upon the threshold of my door
Of individual life, I shall command
The uses of my soul, nor lift my hand
Serenely in the sunshine as before,
Without the sense of that which I forbore,—
Thy touch upon the palm. The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine

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*Sonnet 1.* 13. **Death.** Miss Barrett had been an invalid for years.

*Sonnet 2.* 5. **amerce,** deprive of, as by way of punishment. 7. **deathweights,** small weights placed upon the eyelids of a dead person to hold them shut.

*Sonnet 3.* 7. **gages,** pledges. 12. **cypress tree,** a symbol of death. (See note on *Sonnet 1*, line 13).

*Sonnet 3.* 13. **chrism,** consecrated oil, used in various annointing ceremonies.

*Sonnet 5.* 2. **Electra,** daughter of Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ. With her brother Orestes, she avenged the murder of her father. As a part of the plan Orestes feigned death, and Electra was given possession of an urn supposed to contain his ashes. When she saw him alive, she expressed a sudden revulsion of feeling. 11. **laurels,** crowns of laurel, signifying poetic fame.

With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

### 7

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved yesterday
(The singing angels know), are only dear
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

### 8

What can I give thee back, O liberal
And princely giver, who hast brought the gold
And purple of thine heart, unstained, untold,
And laid them on the outside of the wall
For such as I to take or leave withal,
In unexpected largesse? Am I cold,
Ungrateful, that for these most manifold
High gifts, I render nothing back at all?
Not so; not cold — but very poor instead.
Ask God, who knows. For frequent tears have run
The colors from my life, and left so dead
And pale a stuff, it were not fitly done
To give the same as pillow to thy head.
Go farther! let it serve to trample on.

### 9

Can it be right to give what I can give?
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears
As salt as mine, and hear the sighing years
Re-sighing on my lips renunciative
Through those infrequent smiles which fail to live
For all thy adjurations? O my fears,
That this can scarce be right! We are not peers,
So to be lovers; and I own, and grieve,
That givers of such gifts as mine are, must
Be counted with the ungenerous. Out, alas!
I will not soil thy purple with my dust,
Nor breathe my poison on thy Venice-glass,
Nor give thee any love — which were unjust.
Belovéd, I only love thee! let it pass.

### 10

Yet, love, mere love, is beautiful indeed
And worthy of acceptation. Fire is bright,
Let temple burn, or flax; an equal light
Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed:
And love is fire. And when I say at need,
*I love thee* . . . mark! . . . *I love thee* — in thy sight
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
With conscience of the new rays that proceed
Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low
In love, when love the lowest; meanest creatures
Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
And what I *feel*, across the inferior features
Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show
How that great work of Love enhances Nature's.

### 11

And therefore if to love can be desert,
I am not all unworthy. Cheeks as pale
As these you see, and trembling knees that fail
To bear the burden of a heavy heart —
This weary minstrel-life that once was girt
To climb Aornus, and can scarce avail
To pipe now 'gainst the valley nightingale
A melancholy music — why advert
To these things? O Belovéd, it is plain
I am not of thy worth nor for thy place!
And yet, because I love thee, I obtain
From that same love this vindicating grace,
To live on still in love, and yet in vain —
To bless thee, yet renounce thee to thy face.

### 12

Indeed this very love which is my boast,
And which, when rising up from breast to brow,
Doth crown me with a ruby large enow
To draw men's eyes and prove the inner cost —
This love even, all my worth, to the uttermost,
I should not love withal, unless that thou
Hadst set me an example, shown me how,
When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed,
And love called love. And thus, I cannot speak
Of love even, as a good thing of my own:

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*Sonnet 9.* 12. **Venice-glass.** There was a tradition that poison would break this especially thin and delicate ware.
*Sonnet 11.* 6. **Aornus,** a mountain in India.

Thy soul hath snatched up mine all faint and weak,
And placed it by thee on a golden throne —
And that I love (O soul, we must be meek!)
Is by thee only, whom I love alone.

13

And wilt thou have me fashion into speech
The love I bear thee, finding words enough,
And hold the torch out, while the winds are rough,
Between our faces, to cast light on each? —
I drop it at thy feet. I cannot teach
My hand to hold my spirit so far off
From myself — me — that I should bring thee proof
In words, of love hid in me out of reach.
Nay, let the silence of my womanhood
Commend my woman-love to thy belief —
Seeing that I stand unwon, however wooed,
And rend the garment of my life, in brief,
By a most dauntless, voiceless fortitude,
Lest one touch of this heart convey its grief.

14

If thou must love me, let it be for naught
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile — her look — her way
Of speaking gently — for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day" —
For these things in themselves, Belovéd, may
Be changed, or change for thee — and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry —
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

dies want [illegible] love.
Love for the sake of loving.

15

Accuse me not, beseech thee, that I wear
Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;
For we two look two ways, and cannot shine
With the same sunlight on our brow and hair.
On me thou lookest with no doubting care,
As on a bee shut in a crystalline;
Since sorrow hath shut me safe in love's divine,
And to spread wing and fly in the outer air
Were most impossible failure, if I strove
To fail so. But I look on thee — on thee —
Beholding, besides love, the end of love,
Hearing oblivion beyond memory;
As one who sits and gazes from above,
Over the rivers to the bitter sea.

16

And yet, because thou overcomest so,
Because thou art more noble and like a king,
Thou canst prevail against my fears and fling
Thy purple round me, till my heart shall grow
Too close against thine heart henceforth to know
How it shook when alone. Why, conquering
May prove as lordly and complete a thing
In lifting upward, as in crushing low!
And as a vanquished soldier yields his sword
To one who lifts him from the bloody earth,
Even so, Belovéd, I at last record,
Here ends my strife. If *thou* invite me forth,
I rise above abasement at the word.
Make thy love larger to enlarge my worth.

17

My poet, thou canst touch on all the notes
God set between his After and Before,
And strike up and strike off the general roar
Of the rushing worlds a melody that floats
In the serene air purely. Antidotes
Of medicated music, answering for
Mankind's forlornest uses, thou canst pour
From thence into their ears. God's will devotes
Thine to such ends, and mine to wait on thine.
How, Dearest, wilt thou have me for most use?
A hope, to sing by gladly? or a fine
Sad memory, with thy songs to interfuse?
A shade, in which to sing — of palm or pine?
A grave, on which to rest from singing? Choose.

18

I never gave a lock of hair away
To a man, Dearest, except this to thee,
Which now upon my fingers thoughtfully,
I ring out to the full brown length and say
"Take it." My day of youth went yesterday;
My hair no longer bounds to my foot's glee,
Nor plant I it from rose or myrtle-tree,
As girls do, any more. It only may
Now shade on two pale cheeks the mark of tears,
Taught drooping from the head that hangs aside
Through sorrow's trick. I thought the funeral-shears
Would take this first, but Love is justified —
Take it thou, finding pure, from all those years,
The kiss my mother left here when she died.

### 19

The soul's Rialto hath its merchandise;
I barter curl for curl upon that mart,
And from my poet's forehead to my heart
Receive this lock which outweighs argosies —
As purply black, as erst to Pindar's eyes
The dim purpureal tresses gloomed athwart
The nine white Muse-brows. For this counterpart, . . .
The bay-crown's shade, Belovéd, I surmise,
Still lingers on thy curl, it is so black!
Thus, with a fillet of smooth-kissing breath,
I tie the shadows safe from gliding back,
And lay the gift where nothing hindereth;
Here on my heart, as on thy brow, to lack
No natural heat till mine grows cold in death.

dream- before she knew him

the Queen

### 20

Belovéd, my Belovéd, when I think
That thou wast in the world a year ago,
What time I sat alone here in the snow
And saw no footprint, heard the silence sink
No moment at thy voice, but, link by link,
Went counting all my chains as if that so
They never could fall off at any blow
Struck by thy possible hand — why, thus I drink
Of life's great cup of wonder! Wonderful,
Never to feel thee thrill the day or night
With personal act or speech — nor ever cull
Some prescience of thee with the blossoms white
Thou sawest growing! Atheists are as dull,
Who cannot guess God's presence out of sight.

ladies like to talk, they are vague

### 21

Say over again, and yet once over again,
That thou dost love me. Though the word repeated
Should seem "a cuckoo-song," as thou dost treat it,
Remember, never to the hill or plain,
Valley and wood, without her cuckoo-strain
Comes the fresh Spring in all her green completed.
Belovéd, I, amid the darkness greeted
By a doubtful spirit-voice, in that doubt's pain
Cry, "Speak once more — thou lovest!" Who can fear
Too many stars, though each in heaven shall roll,
Too many flowers, though each shall crown the year?
Say thou dost love me, love me, love me — toll
The silver iterance! — only minding, Dear,
To love me also in silence with thy soul.

### 22

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvéd point — what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovéd — where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

### 23

Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead,
Wouldst thou miss any life in losing mine?
And would the sun for thee more coldly shine
Because of grave-damps falling round my head?
I marveled, my Belovéd, when I read
Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine —
But . . . *so* much to thee? Can I pour thy wine
While my hands tremble? Then my soul, instead
Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range.
Then, love me, Love! look on me — breathe on me!
As brighter ladies do not count it strange,
For love, to give up acres and degree,
I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange
My near sweet view of Heaven, for earth with thee!

### 24

Let the world's sharpness, like a clasping knife,
Shut in upon itself and do no harm
In this close hand of Love, now soft and warm,
And let us hear no sound of human strife
After the click of the shutting. Life to life —
I lean upon thee, Dear, without alarm,
And feel as safe as guarded by a charm
Against the stab of worldlings, who if rife
Are weak to injure. Very whitely still
The lilies of our lives may reassure
Their blossoms from their roots, accessible

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*Sonnet 19.* 1. **Rialto,** a bridge over the Grand Canal in Venice. It is lined with shops. 5. **Pindar,** a famous Greek lyric poet (518-446?, B.C.) 7. **nine . . . Muse-brows,** the brows of the nine Muses. They were daughters of Jove and goddesses of poetry, art, music, etc. 8. **bay-crown,** a wreath of laurel bestowed upon a poet. 10. **fillet,** a white and red band worn in ancient times upon the forehead as a sign of religious consecration and of inviolability.

Alone to heavenly dews that drop not fewer,
Growing straight, out of man's reach, on the hill.
God only, who made us rich, can make us poor.

### 25

A heavy heart, Belovéd, have I borne
From year to year until I saw thy face,
And sorrow after sorrow took the place
Of all those natural joys as lightly worn
As the stringed pearls, each lifted in its turn
By a beating heart at dance-time. Hopes apace
Were changed to long despairs, till God's own grace
Could scarcely lift above the world forlorn
My heavy heart. Then *thou* didst bid me bring
And let it drop adown thy calmly great
Deep being! Fast it sinketh, as a thing
Which its own nature doth precipitate,
While thine doth close above it, mediating
Betwixt the stars and the unaccomplished fate.

### 26

I lived with visions for my company
Instead of men and women, years ago,
And found them gentle mates, nor thought to know
A sweeter music than they played to me.
But soon their trailing purple was not free
Of this world's dust, their lutes did silent grow,
And I myself grew faint and blind below
Their vanishing eyes. Then THOU didst come — to be,
Belovéd, what they seemed. Their shining fronts,
Their songs, their splendors (better, yet the same,
As river-water hallowed into fonts),
Met in thee, and from out thee overcame
My soul with satisfaction of all wants:
Because God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame.

### 27

My own Belovéd, who hast lifted me
From this drear flat of earth where I was thrown,
And, in betwixt the languid ringlets, blown
A life-breath, till the forehead hopefully
Shines out again, as all the angels see,
Before thy saving kiss! My own, my own,
Who camest to me when the world was gone,
And I who looked for only God, found *thee!*
I find thee; I am safe, and strong, and glad.
As one who stands in dewless asphodel
Looks backward on the tedious time he had
In the upper life — so I, with bosom-swell,
Make witness, here, between the good and bad,
That Love, as strong as Death, retrieves as well.

### 28

My letters! all dead paper, mute and white!
And yet they seem alive and quivering
Against my tremulous hands which loose the string
And let them drop down on my knee tonight.
This said — he wished to have me in his sight
Once, as a friend; this fixed a day in spring
To come and touch my hand . . . a simple thing,
Yet I wept for it! — this, . . . the paper's light . . .
Said, *Dear, I love thee;* and I sank and quailed
As if God's future thundered on my past.
This said, *I am thine* — and so its ink has paled
With lying at my heart that beat too fast.
And this . . . O Love, thy words have ill availed
If, what this said, I dared repeat at last!

### 29

I think of thee! — my thoughts do twine and bud
About thee, as wild vines, about a tree,
Put out broad leaves, and soon there's naught to see
Except the straggling green which hides the wood.
Yet, O my palm-tree, be it understood
I will not have my thoughts instead of thee
Who art dearer, better! Rather, instantly
Renew thy presence; as a strong tree should,
Rustle thy boughs and set thy trunk all bare,
And let these bands of greenery which insphere thee
Drop heavily down — burst, shattered, everywhere!
Because, in this deep joy to see and hear thee
And breathe within thy shadow a new air,
I do not think of thee — I am too near thee.

### 30

I see thine image through my tears tonight,
And yet today I saw thee smiling. How
Refer the cause? — Belovéd, is it thou
Or I, who makes me sad? The acolyte
Amid the chanted joy and thankful rite

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*Sonnet 27.* 10. **asphodel,** a lily-like flower supposed by the Greeks to grow in Hades.

*Sonnet 30.* 4. **acolyte.** See note on line 53, page 168.

May so fall flat, with pale insensate brow,
On the altar-stair. I hear thy voice and vow,
Perplexed, uncertain, since thou art out of sight,
As he, in his swooning ears, the choir's Amen.
Belovéd, dost thou love? or did I see all
The glory as I dreamed, and fainted when
Too vehement light dilated my ideal,
For my soul's eyes? Will that light come again,
As now these tears come — falling hot and real?

### 31

Thou comest! all is said without a word.
I sit beneath thy looks, as children do
In the noon-sun, with souls that tremble through
Their happy eyelids from an unaverred
Yet prodigal inward joy. Behold, I erred
In that last doubt! and yet I cannot rue
The sin most, but the occasion — that we two
Should for a moment stand unministered
By a mutual presence. Ah, keep near and close,
Thou dovelike help! and, when my fears would rise,
With thy broad heart serenely interpose;
Brood down with thy divine sufficiencies
These thoughts which tremble when bereft of those,
Like callow birds left desert to the skies.

### 32

The first time that the sun rose on thine oath
To love me, I looked forward to the moon
To slacken all those bonds which seemed too soon
And quickly tied to make a lasting troth.
Quick-loving hearts, I thought, may quickly loathe;
And, looking on myself, I seemed not one
For such man's love! — more like an out-of-tune
Worn viol, a good singer would be wroth
To spoil his song with, and which, snatched in haste,
Is laid down at the first ill-sounding note.
I did not wrong myself so, but I placed
A wrong on *thee*. For perfect strains may float
'Neath master-hands, from instruments defaced —
And great souls, at one stroke, may do and doat.

### 33

Yes, call me by my pet-name! let me hear
The name I used to run at, when a child,
From innocent play, and leave the cowslips piled,
To glance up in some face that proved me dear
With the look of its eyes. I miss the clear
Fond voices which, being drawn and reconciled
Into the music of Heaven's undefiled,
Call me no longer. Silence on the bier,
While I call God — call God! — So let thy mouth
Be heir to those who are now exanimate.
Gather the north flowers to complete the south,
And catch the early love up in the late.
Yes, call me by that name — and I, in truth,
With the same heart, will answer and not wait.

### 34

With the same heart, I said, I'll answer thee
As those, when thou shalt call me by my name —
Lo, the vain promise! is the same, the same,
Perplexed and ruffled by life's strategy?
When called before, I told how hastily
I dropped my flowers or brake off from a game,
To run and answer with the smile that came
At play last moment, and went on with me
Through my obedience. When I answer now,
I drop a grave thought, break from solitude;
Yet still my heart goes to thee — ponder how —
Not as to a single good, but all my good!
Lay thy hand on it, best one, and allow
That no child's foot could run fast as this blood.

### 35

If I leave all for thee, wilt thou exchange
And be all to me? Shall I never miss
Home-talk and blessing and the common kiss
That comes to each in turn, nor count it strange,
When I look up, to drop on a new range
Of walls and floors, another home than this?
Nay, wilt thou fill that place by me which is
Filled by dead eyes too tender to know change?
That's hardest. If to conquer love, has tried,
To conquer grief, tries more, as all things prove;
For grief indeed is love and grief beside.
Alas, I have grieved so I am hard to love.

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*Sonnet 33.* 1. **pet-name,** "Ba," pronounced as if spelled *Bay.*

*Sonnet 33.* 10. **exanimate,** lifeless.

*Sonnet 35.* 1. **leave all.** Because of the attitude of the father of Miss Barrett, her marriage involved the severance of all home ties.

Yet love me — wilt thou? Open thine heart wide,
And fold within the wet wings of thy dove.

### 36

When we met first and loved, I did not build
Upon the event with marble. Could it mean
To last, a love set pendulous between
Sorrow and sorrow? Nay, I rather thrilled,
Distrusting every light that seemed to gild
The onward path, and feared to overlean
A finger even. And, though I have grown serene
And strong since then, I think that God has willed
A still renewable fear . . . O love, O troth . . .
Lest these enclaspéd hands should never hold,
This mutual kiss drop down between us both
As an unowned thing, once the lips being cold.
And Love, be false! if *he*, to keep one oath,
Must lose one joy, by his life's star foretold.

### 37

Pardon, oh, pardon, that my soul should make,
Of all that strong divineness which I know
For thine and thee, an image only so
Formed of the sand, and fit to shift and break.
It is that distant years which did not take
Thy sovranty, recoiling with a blow,
Have forced my swimming brain to undergo
Their doubt and dread, and blindly to forsake
Thy purity of likeness and distort
Thy worthiest love to a worthless counterfeit:
As if a shipwrecked Pagan, safe in port,
His guardian sea-god to commemorate,
Should set a sculptured porpoise, gills a-snort
And vibrant tail, within the temple-gate.

### 38

First time he kissed me, he but only kissed
The fingers of this hand wherewith I write;
And ever since, it grew more clean and white,
Slow to world-greetings, quick with its "Oh, list,"
When the angels speak. A ring of amethyst
I could not wear here, plainer to my sight,
Than that first kiss. The second passed in height
The first, and sought the forehead, and half missed,
Half falling on the hair. O beyond meed!
That was the chrism of love, which love's own crown,
With sanctifying sweetness, did precede.
The third upon my lips was folded down
In perfect, purple state; since when, indeed,
I have been proud and said, "My love, my own."

### 39

Because thou hast the power and own'st the grace
To look through and behind this mask of me
(Against which years have beat thus blanchingly
With their rains), and behold my soul's true face,
The dim and weary witness of life's race —
Because thou hast the faith and love to see,
Through that same soul's distracting lethargy,
The patient angel waiting for a place
In the new Heavens — because nor sin nor woe,
Nor God's infliction, nor death's neighborhood,
Nor all which others viewing, turn to go,
Nor all which makes me tired of all, self-viewed —
Nothing repels thee . . . Dearest, teach me so
To pour out gratitude, as thou dost, good!

### 40

Oh, yes! they love through all this world of ours!
I will not gainsay love, called love forsooth.
I have heard love talked in my early youth,
And since, not so long back but that the flowers
Then gathered, smell still. Mussulmans and Giaours
Throw kerchiefs at a smile, and have no ruth
For any weeping. Polypheme's white tooth
Slips on the nut if, after frequent showers,
The shell is over-smooth — and not so much
Will turn the thing called love, aside to hate
Or else to oblivion. But thou art not such
A lover, my Belovéd! Thou canst wait
Through sorrow and sickness, to bring souls to touch,
And think it soon when others cry, "Too late."

### 41

I thank all who have loved me in their hearts,
With thanks and love from mine. Deep thanks to all
Who paused a little near the prison-wall
To hear my music in its louder parts
Ere they went onward, each one to the mart's
Or temple's occupation, beyond call.
But thou, who, in my voice's sink and fall
When the sob took it, thy divinest Art's
Own instrument didst drop down at thy foot

---

*Sonnet 39.* 10. **God's infliction**, her illness, which delayed her acceptance of Browning's proposal of marriage.

*Sonnet 40.* 5. **Mussulmans**, Mohammedans. **Giaours**, the name applied by Mohammedans to disbelievers in their religion, especially Christians. 7. **Polypheme**, Polyphemus, the one-eyed monster who imprisoned Odysseus and his companions and devoured two of them daily until Odysseus got the monster drunk, put out his eye, and escaped.

To hearken what I said between my tears . . .
Instruct me how to thank thee! Oh, to shoot
My soul's full meaning into future years,
That *they* should lend it utterance, and salute
Love that endures, from Life that disappears!

### 42

"*My future will not copy fair my past*" —
I wrote that once; and thinking at my side
My ministering life-angel justified
The word by his appealing look upcast
To the white throne of God, I turned at last,
And there, instead, saw thee, not unallied
To angels in thy soul! Then I, long tried
By natural ills, received the comfort fast,
While budding, at thy sight, my pilgrim's staff
Gave out green leaves with morning dews impearled.
I seek no copy now of life's first half;
Leave here the pages with long musing curled,
And write me new my future's epigraph,
New angel mine, unhoped for in the world!

### 43

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints — I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

### 44

Belovéd, thou hast brought me many flowers
Plucked in the garden, all the summer through
And winter, and it seemed as if they grew
In this close room, nor missed the sun and showers.
So, in the like name of that love of ours,
Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew
From my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers
Be overgrown with bitter weeds and rue,
And wait thy weeding; yet here's eglantine,
Here's ivy! — take them, as I used to do
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.
Instruct thine eyes to keep their colors true,
And tell thy soul their roots are left in mine.
(*1845-1846;* 1850)

## LIFE AND LOVE

Fast this Life of mine was dying,
  Blind already and calm as death,
Snowflakes on her bosom lying
  Scarcely heaving with her breath.

Love came by, and having known her
  In a dream of fabled lands,
Gently stooped, and laid upon her
  Mystic chrism of holy hands;

Drew his smile across her folded
  Eyelids, as the swallow dips;
Breathed as finely as the cold did
  Through the locking of her lips.

So, when Life looked upward, being
  Warmed and breathed on from above,
What sight could she have for seeing,
  Evermore . . . but only LOVE? (1850)

## From *CASA GUIDI WINDOWS*

### From PART II

A cry is up in England, which doth ring
  The hollow world through, that for ends of trade
And virtue and God's better worshiping,
  We henceforth should exalt the name of Peace
And leave those rusty wars that eat the soul —
  Besides their clippings at our golden fleece.
I, too, have loved peace, and from bole to bole
  Of immemorial undeciduous trees
Would write, as lovers use upon a scroll,
  The holy name of Peace and set it high
Where none could pluck it down. On trees, I say —

---

*Sonnet 42.* 9. **pilgrim's staff**, like the rod of Aaron, which "budded and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms" (*Numbers*, 17:8). See *Ave Atque Vale*, 166 and note, page 692.

*Sonnet 43.* 14. **I shall . . . death.** See Browning's *Prospice*, page 295.

*Casa Guidi Windows.* The house in which the Brownings lived in Florence was called Casa Guidi. *Casa Guidi Windows* is a long poem in which Mrs. Browning voices the cause of Italian liberty. It contains descriptions of Florence, of noted personages of Italian history, etc. See Browning's *The Italian in England*, page 209. See also the Critical Notes.

Not upon gibbets! — With the greenery
Of dewy branches and the flowery May,
Sweet mediation betwixt earth and sky
Providing, for the shepherd's holiday.
Not upon gibbets! though the vulture leaves
The bones to quiet, which he first picked bare.
Not upon dungeons! though the wretch who grieves
And groans within less stirs the outer air
Than any little field-mouse stirs the sheaves.
Not upon chain-bolts! though the slave's despair
Has dulled his helpless miserable brain
And left him blank beneath the freeman's whip
To sing and laugh out idiocies of pain.
Nor yet on starving homes! where many a lip
Has sobbed itself asleep through curses vain.
I love no peace which is not fellowship
And which includes not mercy. I would have
Rather the raking of the guns across
The world, and shrieks against Heaven's architrave;
Rather the struggle in the slippery fosse
Of dying men and horses, and the wave
Blood-bubbling. . . . Enough said! — by Christ's own cross,
And by this faint heart of my womanhood,
Such things are better than a Peace that sits
Beside a hearth in self-commended mood,
And takes no thought how wind and rain by fits
Are howling out of doors against the good
Of the poor wanderer. What! your peace admits
Of outside anguish while it keeps at home?
I loathe to take its name upon my tongue.
'Tis nowise peace; 'tis treason, stiff with doom —
'Tis gagged despair and inarticulate wrong —
Annihilated Poland, stifled Rome,
Dazed Naples, Hungary fainting 'neath the thong,
And Austria wearing a smooth olive-leaf
On her brute forehead, while her hoofs outpress
The life from these Italian souls, in brief.
O Lord of Peace, who art Lord of Righteousness,
Constrain the anguished worlds from sin and grief,
Pierce them with conscience, purge them with redress,
And give us peace which is no counterfeit!

* * *

*(1851; 1851)*

## A CURSE FOR A NATION

### PROLOGUE

I heard an angel speak last night,
And he said, "Write!
Write a Nation's curse for me,
And send it over the Western Sea."

I faltered, taking up the word:
"Not so, my lord!
If curses must be, choose another
To send thy curse against my brother.

"For I am bound by gratitude,
By love and blood,
To brothers of mine across the sea,
Who stretch out kindly hands to me."

"Therefore," the voice said, "shalt thou write
My curse tonight.
From the summits of love a curse is driven,
As lightning is from the tops of heaven."

"Not so," I answered. "Evermore
My heart is sore
For my own land's sins; for little feet
Of children bleeding along the street;

"For parked-up honors that gainsay
The right of way;
For almsgiving through a door that is
Not open enough for two friends to kiss;

"For love of freedom which abates
Beyond the Straits;
For patriot virtue starved to vice on
Self-praise, self-interest, and suspicion;

"For an oligarchic parliament,
And bribes well-meant.

---

416. **Poland.** Poland, once a powerful and important nation, had been dismembered in 1772, 1793, and 1795 and annexed by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. An uprising in 1830-32 was put down with great cruelty. When this poem was written, Hungary and Italy were both under the despotic control of Austria. Mrs. Browning was in Florence in 1847-49 when attempts were made by both Hungary and Italy to throw off the hated rule of Austria.

*A Curse for a Nation.* This poem is directed at the United States in its practice of slavery. When it appeared it was wrongly interpreted as an attack upon England. It was written in Italy.

2. **Write,** a command like that given by the angel to St. John, as told in *Revelation*, 21:5. 20. **children bleeding,** etc. See *The Cry of the Children*, page 360. 21. **parked-up honors,** probably the great estates in England closed to the people. 26. **the Straits,** the Straits of Dover, which separate England from the continent. The reference is to Hungary, Italy, and Poland. See note on *Casa Guidi Windows*, 416, preceding column.

What curse to another land assign,
When heavy-souled for the sins of mine?"

"Therefore," the voice said, "shalt thou write
My curse tonight,
Because thou hast strength to see and hate
A foul thing done *within* thy gate."

"Not so," I answered once again.
"To curse, choose men.
For I, a woman, have only known
How the heart melts and the tears run down."

"Therefore," the voice said, "shalt thou write
My curse tonight.
Some women weep and curse, I say
(And no one marvels), night and day.

"And thou shalt take their part tonight,
Weep and write.
A curse from the depths of womanhood
Is very salt, and bitter, and good."

So thus I wrote, and mourned indeed,
What all may read.
And thus, as was enjoined on me,
I send it over the Western Sea.

### THE CURSE

1

Because ye have broken your own chain
With the strain
Of brave men climbing a Nation's height,
Yet thence bear down with brand and thong
On souls of others — for this wrong
This is the curse. Write.

Because yourselves are standing straight
In the state
Of Freedom's foremost acolyte,
Yet keep calm footing all the time
On writhing bond slaves — for this crime
This is the curse. Write.

Because ye prosper in God's name,
With a claim
To honor in the old world's sight,
Yet do the fiend's work perfectly
In strangling martyrs — for this lie
This is the curse. Write.

2

Ye shall watch while kings conspire
Round the people's smoldering fire,
And, warm for your part,
Shall never dare — O shame! —
To utter the thought into flame
Which burns at your heart.
This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while nations strive
With the bloodhounds, die or survive,
Drop faint from their jaws,
Or throttle them backward to death;
And only under your breath
Shall favor the cause.
This is the curse. Write.

Ye shall watch while strong men draw
The nets of feudal law
To strangle the weak;
And, counting the sin for a sin,
Your soul shall be sadder within
Than the word ye shall speak.
This is the curse. Write.

When good men are praying erect
That Christ may avenge his elect
And deliver the earth,
The prayer in your ears, said low,
Shall sound like the tramp of a foe
That's driving you forth.
This is the curse. Write.

When wise men give you their praise,
They shall pause in the heat of the phrase,
As if carried too far.
When ye boast your own charters kept true,
Ye shall blush; for the thing which ye do
Derides what ye are.
This is the curse. Write.

When fools cast taunts at your gate,
Your scorn ye shall somewhat abate
As ye look o'er the wall;
For your conscience, tradition, and name
Explode with a deadlier blame
Than the worst of them all.
This is the curse. Write.

Go, wherever ill deeds shall be done,
Go, plant your flag in the sun
Beside the ill-doers!
And recoil from clenching the curse
Of God's witnessing Universe
With a curse of yours.
THIS is the curse. Write.

(1860)

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*The Curse.* 1. **chain**, the chain that tied the American colonies to England. 9. **acolyte**, an assistant at the altar in the Mass.

26. **nations**, especially Italy and Hungary, then under control of Austria.

## THE FORCED RECRUIT

In the ranks of the Austrian you found him,
He died with his face to you all;
Yet bury him here where around him
You honor your bravest that fall.

Venetian, fair-featured and slender,
He lies shot to death in his youth,
With a smile on his lips over-tender
For any mere soldier's dead mouth.

No stranger, and yet not a traitor,
Though alien the cloth on his breast,
Underneath it how seldom a greater
Young heart has a shot sent to rest!

By your enemy tortured and goaded
To march with them, stand in their file,
His musket (see) never was loaded,
He facing your guns with that smile!

As orphans yearn on to their mothers,
He yearned to your patriot bands —
"Let me die for our Italy, brothers,
If not in your ranks, by your hands!

"Aim straightly, fire steadily! spare me
A ball in the body which may
Deliver my heart here, and tear me
This badge of the Austrian away!"

So thought he, so died he this morning.
What then? — many others have died.
Aye, but easy for men to die scorning
The death-stroke, who fought side by side—

One tricolor floating above them;
Struck down 'mid triumphant acclaims
Of an Italy rescued to love them
And blazon the brass with their names.

But he — without witness or honor,
Mixed, shamed in his country's regard,
With the tyrants who march in upon her —
Died faithful and passive; 'twas hard.

'Twas sublime. In a cruel restriction
Cut off from the guerdon of sons,
With most filial obedience, conviction,
His soul kissed the lips of her guns.

That moves you? Nay, grudge not to show it,
While digging a grave for him here;
The others who died, says your poet,
Have glory — let *him* have a tear.

(*1859;* 1860)

## A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river?
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river;
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
And the dragon-fly had fled away,
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can,
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan
(How tall it stood in the river!),
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan
(Laughed while he sat by the river),
"The only way, since gods began
To make sweet music, they could succeed."
Then, dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
He blew in power by the river.

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan!
Piercing sweet by the river!
Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
The sun on the hill forgot to die,
And the lilies revived, and the dragon-fly
Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan,
To laugh as he sits by the river,
Making a poet out of a man;
The true gods sigh for the cost and pain —
For the reed which grows nevermore again
As a reed with the reeds in the river.

(1860)

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*The Forced Recruit.* This poem is based upon an actual incident of an Italian soldier being forced to serve in the Austrian army.

*A Musical Instrument.* See introductory note on *The Dead Pan,* page 362.

## EMILY BRONTË (1818-1848)

### REMEMBRANCE

Cold in the earth — and the deep snow piled above thee,
Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!
Have I forgot, my only Love, to love thee,
Severed at last by Time's all-severing wave?

Now, when alone, do my thoughts no longer hover
Over the mountains, on that northern shore,
Resting their wings where heath and fern-leaves cover
Thy noble heart for ever, ever more?

Cold in the earth — and fifteen wild Decembers,
From those brown hills, have melted into spring;
Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

Sweet Love of youth, forgive, if I forget thee,
While the world's tide is bearing me along;
Other desires and other hopes beset me,
Hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!

No later light has lightened up my heaven,
No second morn has ever shone for me;
All my life's bliss from thy dear life was given,
All my life's bliss is in the grave with thee.

But, when the days of golden dreams had perished,
And ev'n Despair was powerless to destroy;
Then did I learn how existence could be cherished,
Strengthened, and fed without the aid of joy.

Then did I check the tears of useless passion —
Weaned my young soul from yearning after thine;
Sternly denied its burning wish to hasten
Down to that tomb already more than mine.

And, even yet, I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I seek the empty world again?
(*1845;* 1846)

### SONG

The linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather bells
That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast;
The wild birds raise their brood;
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
Have left her solitude.

I ween that, when the grave's dark wall
Did first her form retain,
They thought their hearts could ne'er recall
The light of joy again.

They thought the tide of grief would flow
Unchecked through future years;
But where is all their anguish now,
And where are all their tears?

Well, let them fight for honor's breath,
Or pleasure's shade pursue —
The dweller in the land of death
Is changed and careless too.

And, if their eyes should watch and weep
Till sorrow's source were dry,
She would not, in her tranquil sleep,
Return a single sigh.

Blow, west-wind, by the lonely mound,
And murmur, summer streams!
There is no need of other sound
To soothe my lady's dreams.
(1846)

### THE OLD STOIC

Riches I hold in light esteem,
And Love I laugh to scorn;
And lust of fame was but a dream
That vanished with the morn;

And if I pray, the only prayer
That moves my lips for me
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear,
And give me liberty!"

Yes, as my swift days near their goal,
'Tis all that I implore:
In life and death a chainless soul,
With courage to endure.
(1846)

### WARNING AND REPLY

In the earth — the earth — thou shalt be laid,
A gray stone standing over thee;
Black mold beneath thee spread,
And black mold to cover thee.

---

*Remembrance.* The persons referred to in Miss Brontë's poems are imaginary.

*The Old Stoic.* The Stoics were a school of Greek philosophers (2d century B.C.) who held that virtue was the highest good and that all feelings should be rigidly subdued.

"Well — there is rest there,
So fast come thy prophecy;
The time when my sunny hair
Shall with grass roots entwinéd be."

But cold — cold is that resting-place,
Shut out from joy and liberty,
And all who loved thy living face
Will shrink from it shudderingly.

"Not so. Here the world is chill,
And sworn friends fall from me;
But there — they will own me still,
And prize my memory."

Farewell, then, all that love,
All that deep sympathy.
Sleep on; Heaven laughs above,
Earth never misses thee.

Turf-sod and tombstone drear
Part human company;
One heart breaks only — here,
But that heart was worthy thee! (1850)

### OFTEN REBUKED, YET ALWAYS BACK RETURNING

Often rebuked, yet always back returning
To those first feelings that were born with me,
And leaving busy chase of wealth and learning
For idle dreams of things which cannot be:

Today, I will seek not the shadowy region;
Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
And visions rising, legion after legion,
Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

I'll walk, but not in old heroic traces,
And not in paths of high morality,
And not among the half-distinguished faces,
The clouded forms of long-past history.

I'll walk where my own nature would be leading —
It vexes me to choose another guide —
Where the gray flocks in ferny glens are feeding,
Where the wild wind blows on the mountain-side.

What have those lonely mountains worth revealing?
More glory and more grief than I can tell:
The earth that wakes one human heart to feeling
Can center both the worlds of Heaven and Hell. (1850)

### NO COWARD SOUL IS MINE

No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere;
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life — that in me has rest,
As I — undying Life — have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts — unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;
So surely anchored on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou were left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for Death,
Nor atom that his might could render void;
Thou — Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.
(1850)

## SIR FRANCIS HASTINGS DOYLE

(1810-1888)

### THE PRIVATE OF THE BUFFS

*Last night*, among his fellow roughs,
He jested, quaffed, and swore —
A drunken private of the Buffs,
Who never looked before.
*Today*, beneath the foeman's frown,
He stands in Elgin's place —

---

*Often Rebuked.* **17. those lonely mountains,** the moors in Yorkshire, where Miss Brontë lived.

*No Coward Soul Is Mine.* Charlotte Brontë states that these are "the last lines my sister Emily ever wrote."

*The Private of the Buffs.* The Buffs were the East Kent Regiment of the British Army, so called from the buff-colored facings of their coats. The poem is based upon a newspaper report of an incident that took place during the war with China in 1860. An English soldier and some native soldiers of the British-Indian Army were captured by the Chinese. When they were commanded to prostrate themselves before their captors, the Indians obeyed, but the Englishman refused; he "was immediately knocked upon the head, and his body thrown on a dunghill." (Doyle's note).

**6. Elgin,** James Bruce, eighth Earl of Elgin (1811-63). He was the British ambassador to China at the time of the incident.

Ambassador from Britain's crown,
  And type of all her race.

Poor, reckless, rude, low-born, untaught,
  Bewildered, and alone,
A heart, with English instinct fraught,
  He yet can call his own.
Aye, tear his body limb from limb,
  Bring cord, or ax, or flame;
He only knows, that not through *him*
  Shall England come to shame.

Far Kentish hop-fields round him seemed,
  Like dreams, to come and go;
Bright leagues of cherry-blossom gleamed,
  One sheet of living snow;
The smoke, above his father's door,
  In gray soft eddyings hung:
Must he then watch it rise no more,
  Doomed by himself, so young?

Yes, honor calls! — with strength like steel
  He put the vision by.
Let dusky Indians whine and kneel;
  An English lad must die.
And thus, with eyes that would not shrink,
  With knee to man unbent,
Unfaltering on its dreadful brink,
  To his red grave he went.

Vain, mightiest fleets of iron framed;
  Vain, those all-shattering guns;
Unless proud England keep, untamed,
  The strong heart of her sons.
So, let his name through Europe ring—
  A man of mean estate,
Who died, as firm as Sparta's king,
  Because his soul was great. (1840)

## THE RED THREAD OF HONOR

Eleven men of England
A breastwork charged in vain;
Eleven men of England
Lie stripped and gashed and slain —
Slain, but of foes that guarded
Their rock-built fortress well,
Some twenty had been mastered
When the last soldier fell.

Whilst Napier piloted his wondrous way
Across the sand-waves of the desert sea;
Then flashed at once, on each fierce clan, dismay,
  Lord of their wild Truckee.
These missed the glen to which their steps were bent,
Mistook a mandate, from afar half heard,
And in that glorious error, calmly went
  To death — without a word.

The robber-chief mused deeply
Above those daring dead;
"Bring here," at length he shouted,
"Bring quick, the battle thread.
Let Eblis blast forever
Their souls, if Allah will;
But we must keep unbroken
The old rules of the Hill.

"Before the Ghiznee tiger
Leapt forth to burn and slay;
Before the holy prophet
Taught our grim tribes to pray;
Before Secunder's lances
Pierced through each Indian glen —
The mountain laws of honor
Were framed for fearless men.

"Still, when a chief dies bravely,
We bind with green *one* wrist —
Green for the brave, for heroes
One crimson thread we twist.
Say ye, O gallant Hillmen,
For these, who life has fled,
Which is the fitting color,
The green one, or the red?"

"Our brethren, laid in honored graves, may wear
Their green reward," each noble savage said;
"To these, whom hawks and hungry wolves shall tear,
  Who dares deny the red?"

Thus conquering hate, and steadfast to the right,
Fresh from the heart that haughty verdict came;
Beneath a waning moon, each spectral height
  Rolled back its loud acclaim.

Once more the chief gazed keenly
Down on those daring dead;
From his good sword their heart's blood
Crept to that crimson thread.
Once more he cried, "The judgment,
Good friends, is wise and true,

---

39. **firm . . . king.** Leonidas, king of Sparta, with his small band of Greeks, was killed at Thermopylæ in 480 B.C. while resisting Xerxes and his great Persian army. When Xerxes demanded that the Greeks surrender their arms, Leonidas replied, "Come and take them."

*The Red Thread of Honor.* This poem is based upon an incident related to Doyle by the English general Sir Charles James Napier (1782-1853), who commanded the British forces during the Indian campaign of 1841-46.

12. **Truckee,** an Indian fortress, which was considered impregnable. 14. **Mistook a mandate.** Cf. *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, page 95. 21. **Eblis,** the devil of Arabian mythology. 22. **Allah,** the supreme being of the Mohammedans. 25. **Ghiznee tiger,** Mahmud the Great (967-1030), sultan of Ghazni, a city in Afghanistan. He was a destructive conqueror of India. 29. **Secunder's lances,** lances from Secunderabad, a British military station in India.

But though the red *be* given,
Have we not more to do?

"These were not stirred by anger,
Nor yet by lust made bold;
Renown they thought above them,
Nor did they look for gold.
To them their leader's signal
Was as the voice of God:
Unmoved, and uncomplaining,
The path it showed they trod.

"As, without sound or struggle,
The stars unhurrying march,
Where Allah's finger guides them,
Through yonder purple arch,
These Franks, sublimely silent,
Without a quickened breath,
Went, in the strength of duty,
Straight to their goal of death.

"If I were now to ask you,
To name our bravest man,
Ye all at once would answer,
'They called him Mehrab Khan.'
He sleeps among his fathers,
Dear to our native land,
With the bright mark he bled for
Firm round his faithful hand.

"The songs they sing of Roostum
Fill all the past with light;
If truth be in their music,
He was a noble knight.
But were those heroes living,
And strong for battle still,
Would Mehrab Khan or Roostum
Have climbed, like these, the Hill?"

And they replied, "Though Mehrab Khan was brave,
As chief, he chose himself what risks to run;
Prince Roostum lied, his forfeit life to save,
Which these had never done."

"Enough!" he shouted fiercely;
"Doomed though they be to hell,
Bind fast the crimson trophy
Round BOTH wrists — bind it well.
Who knows but that great Allah
May grudge such matchless men,
With none so decked in heaven,
To the fiends' flaming den?"

Then all those gallant robbers
Shouted a stern amen;
They raised the slaughtered sergeant,
They raised his mangled ten.
And when we found their bodies
Left bleaching in the wind,
Around *both wrists*, in glory
That crimson thread was twined.

Then Napier's knightly heart, touched to the core,
Rang, like an echo, to that knightly deed;
He bade its memory live for evermore,
That those who run may read. (1840)

## SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON (1810-1886)

### THE FORGING OF THE ANCHOR

Come, see the *Dolphin's* anchor forged! 'tis at a white heat now—
The bellows ceased, the flames decreased; though on the forge's brow
The little flames still fitfully play through the sable mound,
And fitfully you still may see the grim smiths ranking round,
All clad in leathern panoply, their broad hands only bare,
Some rest upon their sledges here, some work the windlass there.

The windlass strains the tackle chains, the black mound heaves below;
And red and deep a hundred veins burst out at every throe.
It rises, roars, rends all outright — O Vulcan, what a glow!
'Tis blinding white, 'tis blasting bright — the high sun shines not so!
The high sun sees not, on the earth, such fiery fearful show!
The roof-ribs swarth, the candent hearth, the ruddy lurid row
Of smiths that stand, an ardent band, like men before the foe!
As, quivering through his fleece of flame, the sailing monster, slow
Sinks on the anvil: — all about the faces fiery grow;
"Hurrah!" they shout, "leap out — leap out"; bang, bang the sledges go;
Hurrah! the jetted lightnings are hissing high and low —

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68. **purple arch**, the heavens. 69. **Frank**, a name used in the East to denote a native of western Europe. 76. **Mehrab Khan**, king of Kabul, a province of Afghanistan. He is one of the great heroes in *Shah Namah* (*Book of Kings*), the Persian epic written by Firdausi about 1000 A.D. 81. **Roostum**, the most illustrious of Persian heroes, supposed to have lived about 600 B.C. He is also one of the heroes in *Shah Namah*. Roostum always fought under an assumed name, and in the fight with his son Sohrab, he denied his identity (see line 91). See Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, 344 ff., page 463.

112. **who . . . read.** Cf. *Habakkuk*, 2:2—"And the Lord answered me, and said, 'Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.'"

*The Forging of the Anchor*. The general idea of this poem is similar to that of Frederic Schiller's *Das Lied von der Glocke* (*The Lay of the Bell*). 9. **Vulcan**, the blacksmith of the gods. 12. **candent**, glowing.

A hailing fount of fire is struck at every squashing blow;
The leathern mail rebounds the hail, the rattling cinders strow
The ground around; at every bound the sweltering fountains flow,
And thick and loud the swinking crowd at every stroke pant "ho!"

Leap out, leap out, my masters; leap out and lay on load!
Let's forge a goodly anchor — a bower thick and broad;
For a heart of oak is hanging on every blow, I bode.
I see the good ship riding all in a perilous road —
The low reef roaring on her lee — the roll of ocean poured
From stem to stern, sea after sea, the mainmast by the board,
The bulwarks down, the rudder gone, the boats stove at the chains!
But courage still, brave mariners — the bower yet remains,
And not an inch to flinch he deigns, save when ye pitch sky high;
Then moves his head, as though he said, "Fear nothing — here am I."

Swing in your strokes in order, let foot and hand keep time;
Your blows make music sweeter far than any steeple's chime;
But, while you sling your sledges, sing — and let the burthen be,
The anchor is the anvil-king, and royal craftsmen we!
Strike in, strike in — the sparks begin to dull their rustling red;
Our hammers ring with sharper din, our work will soon be sped.
Our anchor soon must change his bed of fiery rich array,
For a hammock at the roaring bows, or an oozy couch of clay;
Our anchor soon must change the lay of merry craftsmen here,
For the yeo-heave-o, and the heave-away, and the sighing seamen's cheer;
When, weighing slow, at eve they go — far, far from love and home;
And sobbing sweethearts, in a row, wail o'er the ocean foam.

In livid and obdurate gloom he darkens down at last;
A shapely one he is, and strong, as e'er from cat was cast.
O trusted and trustworthy guard, if thou hadst life like me,
What pleasures would thy toils reward, beneath the deep green sea!
O deep Sea-diver, who might then behold such sights as thou?
The hoary monster's palaces! methinks what joy 'twere now
To go plumb-plunging down amid the assembly of the whales,
And feel the churned sea round me boil beneath their scourging tails!
Then deep in tangle-woods to fight the fierce sea-unicorn,
And send him foiled and bellowing back, for all his ivory horn;
To leave the subtle sworder-fish of bony blade forlorn;
And for the ghastly-grinning shark to laugh his jaws to scorn;
To leap down on the kraken's back, where 'mid Norwegian isles,
He lies, a lubber anchorage for sudden shallowed miles—
Till snorting, like an under-sea volcano, off he rolls;
Meanwhile to swing, a-buffeting the far-astonished shoals
Of his back-browsing ocean-calves; or, haply, in a cove,
Shell-strewn, and consecrate of old to some Undiné's love,
To find the long-haired mermaidens; or, hard by icy lands,
To wrestle with the Sea-serpent, upon cerulean sands.

O broad-armed Fisher of the deep, whose sports can equal thine?
The *Dolphin* weighs a thousand tons, that tugs thy cable line!
And night by night, 'tis thy delight, thy glory day by day,
Through sable sea and breaker white, the giant game to play —
But shamer of our little sports! forgive the name I gave —
A fisher's joy is to destroy — thine office is to save.
O lodger in the sea-kings' halls, couldst thou but understand
Whose be the white bones by thy side, or who that dripping band,

---

21. **swinking**, toiling. 23. **bower**, an anchor carried at the bow. 24. **bode**, proclaim. 34. **burthen**, the refrain of the song.

45. **cat**, the mechanism that holds the anchor suspended outside the ship. 56. **kraken**. See Tennyson's *The Kraken* and note, page 13. 57. **lubber anchorage**, a clumsy thing for ships to anchor to. 60. **back-browsing ocean-calves**, young sea-monsters feeding upon the vegetation growing upon the back of the kraken. 61. **Undiné**, a fabulous female water-spirit.

Slow swaying in the heaving wave, that round about thee bend,
With sounds like breakers in a dream blessing their ancient friend —
Oh, couldst thou know what heroes glide with larger steps round thee,
Thine iron side would swell with pride; thou'dst leap within the sea!
Give honor to their memories who left the pleasant strand,
To shed their blood so freely for the love of Fatherland —
Who left their chance of quiet age and grassy churchyard grave,
So freely, for a restless bed amid the tossing wave —
Oh, though our anchor may not be all I have fondly sung,
Honor him for their memory whose bones he goes among! (*1831;* 1832)

## THE FAIRY THORN

### AN ULSTER BALLAD

"Get up, our Anna dear, from the weary spinning wheel;
  For your father's on the hill, and your mother is asleep;
Come up above the crags, and we'll dance a highland reel
  Around the fairy thorn on the steep."

At Anna Grace's door 'twas thus the maidens cried,
  Three merry maidens fair in kirtles of the green;
And Anna laid the rock and the weary wheel aside,
  The fairest of the four, I ween.

They're glancing through the glimmer of the quiet eve,
  Away in milky wavings of neck and ankle bare;
The heavy-sliding stream in its sleepy song they leave,
  And the crags in the ghostly air.

And linking hand in hand, and singing as they go,
  The maids along the hillside have ta'en their fearless way,
Till they come to where the rowan trees in lonely beauty grow
  Beside the Fairy Hawthorn gray.

The Hawthorn stands between the ashes tall and slim,
  Like matron with her twin granddaughters at her knee;
The rowan berries cluster o'er her low head gray and dim
  In ruddy kisses sweet to see.

The merry maidens four have ranged them in a row,
  Between each lovely couple a stately rowan stem,
And away in mazes wavy like skimming birds they go —
  Oh, never caroled bird like them.

But solemn is the silence of the silvery haze
  That drinks away their voices in echoless repose,
And dreamily the evening has stilled the haunted braes,
  And dreamier the gloaming grows.

And sinking one by one, like lark-notes from the sky
  When the falcon's shadow saileth across the open shaw,
Are hushed the maidens' voices, as cowering down they lie
  In the flutter of their sudden awe.

For, from the air above and the grassy ground beneath,
  And from the mountain-ashes and the old white thorn between,
A power of faint enchantment doth through their beings breathe,
  And they sink down together on the green.

They sink together silent, and, stealing side to side,
  They fling their lovely arms o'er their drooping necks so fair,
Then vainly strive again their naked arms to hide,
  For their shrinking necks again are bare.

Thus clasped and prostrate all, with their heads together bowed,
  Soft o'er their bosoms' beating — the only human sound —
They hear the silky footsteps of the silent fairy crowd,
  Like a river in the air, gliding round.

No scream can any raise, nor prayer can any say,

---

*The Fairy Thorn.* Ulster is the northernmost province of Ireland. Fairies and witches are closely associated with the hawthorn in folklore. Cf. Yeats's *The Stolen Child*, page 861.
6. **kirtles**, short skirts. 7. **rock**, distaff. 8. **ween**, think. 15. **rowan**, the mountain ash.

27. **braes**, hills. 30. **shaw**, thicket.

But wild, wild, the terror of the speechless three —
For they feel fair Anna Grace drawn silently away,
By whom they dare not look to see.

They feel their tresses twine with her parting locks of gold,
And the curls elastic falling, as her head withdraws;
They feel her sliding arms from their trancéd arms unfold,
But they may not look to see the cause.

For heavy on their senses the faint enchantment lies
Through all that night of anguish and perilous amaze;
And neither fear nor wonder can ope their quivering eyes,
Or their limbs from the cold ground raise,

Till out of night the earth has rolled her dewy side,
With every haunted mountain and streamy vale below;
When, as the mist dissolves in the yellow morning-tide,
The maidens' trance dissolveth so.

Then fly the ghastly three as swiftly as they may,
And tell their tale of sorrow to anxious friends in vain;
They pined away and died within the year and day,
And ne'er was Anna Grace seen again.

(1834)

## THE WELSHMEN OF TIRAWLEY

Scorna Boy, the Barretts' bailiff, lewd and lame,
To lift the Lynotts' taxes when he came,
Rudely drew a young maid to him;
Then the Lynotts rose and slew him,
And in Tubber-na-Scorney threw him —
Small your blame,
Sons of Lynott!
Sing the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

Then the Barretts to the Lynotts proposed a choice,
Saying, "Hear, ye murderous brood, men and boys,
For this deed today ye lose
Sight or manhood: say and choose
Which ye keep and which refuse;
And rejoice
That our mercy
Leaves you living for a warning to Tirawley."

Then the little boys of the Lynotts, weeping, said,
"Only leave us our eyesight in our head."
But the bearded Lynotts then
Made answer back again,
"Take our eyes, but leave us men,
Alive or dead,
Sons of Wattin!"
Sing the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

So the Barretts, with sewing-needles sharp and smooth,
Let the light out of the eyes of every youth,
And of every bearded man,
Of the broken Lynott clan;
Then their darkened faces wan
Turning south
To the river —
Sing the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

O'er the slippery stepping-stones of Clochan-na n'all
They drove them, laughing loud at every fall,
As their wandering footsteps dark
Failed to reach the slippery mark,
And the swift stream swallowed stark,
One and all
As they stumbled —
From the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

Of all the blinded Lynotts one alone
Walked erect from stepping-stone to stone;
So back again they brought you,
And a second time they wrought you
With their needles; but never got you
Once to groan,
Emon Lynott,
For the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

---

*The Welshmen of Tirawley.* Tirawley is a barony in the maritime county of Mayo, in the province of Connaught, Ireland. The Barretts and the Lynotts were two Welsh families that had settled in the west of Ireland during one of the invasions of the country. The places mentioned in the poem are all in the vicinity of Tirawley.

2. **lift**, collect. 5. **Tubber-na-Scorney**, Scragg's Well, in the townland of Carns, Tirawley.

23. **Wattin**, the leader of the Barretts (see line 239).
33. **Clochan-na-n'all**. The phrase means *the blind men's stepping-stones*. The stones are still pointed out on the Duvowen River, about four miles north of Crossmolina, in the townland of Garranard. (Ferguson's note.)

But with prompt-projected footstep sure as ever,
Emon Lynott again crossed the river,
Though Duvowen was rising fast,
And the shaking stones o'ercast
By cold floods boiling past;
Yet you never,
Emon Lynott,
Faltered once before your foemen of Tirawley.

But, turning on Ballintubber bank, you stood,
And the Barretts thus bespoke o'er the flood —
"Oh, ye foolish sons of Wattin,
Small amends are these you've gotten,
For, while Scorna Boy lies rotten,
I am good
For vengeance!"
Sing the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

"For 'tis neither in eye nor eyesight that a man
Bears the fortunes of himself and his clan,
But in the manly mind,
And loins with vengeance lined,
That your needles could never find
Though they ran
Through my heart-strings!"
Sing the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

"But, little your women's needles do I reck;
For the night from heaven never fell so black,
But Tirawley, and abroad
From the Moy to Cuan-an-fod,
I could walk it every sod,
Path and track,
Ford and togher,
Seeking vengeance on you, Barretts of Tirawley!

"The night when Dathy O'Dowda broke your camp,
What Barrett among you was it held the lamp —
Showed the way to those two feet,
When through wintry wind and sleet,
I guided your blind retreat
In the swamp
Of Beäl-an-asa?
O ye vengeance-destined ingrates of Tirawley!"

So leaving loud-shriek-echoing Garranard,
The Lynott like a red dog hunted hard,
With his wife and children seven,
'Mong the beasts and fowls of heaven
In the hollows of Glen Nephin,
Light-debarred,
Made his dwelling,
Planning vengeance on the Barretts of Tirawley.

And ere the bright-orbed year its course had run,
On his brown round-knotted knee he nursed a son,
A child of light, with eyes
As clear as are the skies
In summer, when sunrise
Has begun;
So the Lynott
Nursed his vengeance on the Barretts of Tirawley.

And, as ever the bright boy grew in strength and size,
Made him perfect in each manly exercise,
The salmon in the flood,
The dun deer in the wood,
The eagle in the cloud
To surprise
On Ben Nephin,
Far above the foggy fields of Tirawley.

With the yellow-knotted spear-shaft, with the bow,
With the steel, prompt to deal shot and blow,
He taught him from year to year
And trained him, without a peer,
For a perfect cavalier,
Hoping so —
Far his forethought —
For vengeance on the Barretts of Tirawley.

And, when mounted on his proud-bounding steed,
Emon Oge sat a cavalier indeed;
Like the ear upon the wheat
When winds in autumn beat
On the bending stems, his seat;
And the speed
Of his courser
Was the wind from Barna-na-gee o'er Tirawley!

Now when fifteen sunny summers thus were spent
(He perfected in all accomplishment) —
The Lynott said, "My child,
We are over long exiled
From mankind in this wild —

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76. **Moy**, a river in western Ireland. 79. **togher**, causeway. 89. **Garranard**, the home of the Lynotts.

93. **Glen Nephin**, a glen near Ben (Mount) Nephin in the county of Mayo. 128. **Barna-na-gee**, hills near Tirawley.

Time we went
Through the mountain
To the countries lying over-against Tirawley."

So, out over mountain-moors, and mosses brown,
And green steam-gathering vales, they journeyed down;
Till, shining like a star,
Through the dusky gleams afar,
The bailey of Castlebar,
And the town
Of MacWilliam
Rose bright before the wanderers of Tirawley.

"Look southward, my boy, and tell me as we go,
What see'st thou by the loch-head below."
"Oh, a stone-house strong and great,
And a horse-host at the gate,
And a captain in armor of plate —
Grand the show!
Great the glancing!
High the heroes of this land below Tirawley!

"And a beautiful Woman-chief by his side,
Yellow gold on all her gown-sleeves wide;
And in her hand a pearl
Of a young, little, fair-haired girl." —
Said the Lynott, "It is the Earl!
Let us ride
To his presence."
And before him came the exiles of Tirawley.

"God save thee, MacWilliam," the Lynott thus began;
"God save all here besides of this clan;
For gossips dear to me
Are all in company —
For in these four bones ye see
A kindly man
Of the Britons —
Emon Lynott of Garranard of Tirawley.

"And hither, as kindly gossip-law allows,
I come to claim a scion of thy house
To foster; for thy race,
Since William Conquer's days,
Have ever been wont to place,
With some spouse
Of a Briton,
A MacWilliam Oge, to foster in Tirawley.

"And to show thee in what sort our youth are taught,
I have hither to thy home of valor brought
This one son of my age,
For a sample and a pledge
For the equal tutelage,
In right thought,
Word, and action,
Of whatever son ye give into Tirawley."

When MacWilliam beheld the brave boy ride and run,
Saw the spear-shaft from his white shoulder spun —
With a sigh, and with a smile,
He said — "I would give the spoil
Of a county, that Tibbot Moyle,
My own son,
Were accomplished
Like this branch of the kindly Britons of Tirawley."

When the Lady MacWilliam she heard him speak,
And saw the ruddy roses on his cheek,
She said, "I would give a purse
Of red gold to the nurse
That would rear my Tibbot no worse;
But I seek
Hitherto vainly —
Heaven grant that I now have found her in Tirawley!"

So they said to the Lynott, "Here, take our bird!
And as pledge for the keeping of thy word,
Let this scion here remain
Till thou comest back again;
Meanwhile the fitting train
Of a lord
Shall attend thee
With the lordly heir of Connaught into Tirawley."

So back to strong-throng-gathering Garranard,
Like a lord of the country with his guard,
Came the Lynott, before them all,
Once again over Clochan-na-n'all
Steady-striding, erect, and tall,
And his ward
On his shoulders —
To the wonder of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

Then a diligent foster-father you would deem
The Lynott, teaching Tibbot, by mead and stream,
To cast the spear, to ride,
To stem the rushing tide,
With what feats of body beside,

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141. **bailey**, a court of justice. **Castlebar**, the capital of the County of Mayo. 143. **MacWilliam**, the name of the earl. 146. **loch-head**, head of the lake or bay. 163. **gossips**, comrades. 166. **kindly**, kindred. 172. **William Conquer**, William the Conqueror, king of England (from 1066 to 1087).

189. **Tibbot**, Theobald.

Might beseem
A MacWilliam,
Fostered free among the Welshmen of Tirawley.

But the lesson of hell he taught him in heart and mind;
For to what desire soever he inclined,
Of anger, lust, or pride,
He had it gratified,
Till he ranged the circle wide
Of a blind
Self-indulgence,
Ere he came to youthful manhood in Tirawley.

Then, even as when a hunter slips a hound,
Lynott loosed him — God's leashes all unbound —
In the pride of power and station,
And the strength of youthful passion,
On the daughters of thy nation,
All around,
Wattin Barrett!
Oh! the vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley!

Bitter grief and burning anger, rage and shame,
Filled the houses of the Barretts where'er he came;
Till the young men of the Bac,
Drew by night upon his track,
And slew him at Cornassack —
Small your blame,
Sons of Wattin!
Sing the Vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley.

Said the Lynott, "The day of my vengeance is drawing near,
The day for which, through many a long dark year,
I have toiled through grief and sin —
Call ye now the Brehons in,
And let the plea begin
Over the bier
Of MacWilliam,
For an eric upon the Barretts of Tirawley!"

Then the Brehons to MacWilliam Burke decreed
An eric upon Clan Barrett for the deed;
And the Lynott's share of the fine,
As foster-father, was nine
Plowlands and nine score kine;
But no need
Had the Lynott,
Neither care, for land or cattle in Tirawley.

But rising, while all sat silent on the spot,
He said, "The law says — doth it not? —
If the foster-sire elect
His portion to reject,
He may then the right exact
To applot
The short eric."
"'Tis the law," replied the Brehons of Tirawley.

Said the Lynott, "I once before had a choice
Proposed me, wherein law had little voice;
But now I choose, and say,
As lawfully I may,
I applot the mulct today;
So rejoice
In your plowlands
And your cattle, which I renounce throughout Tirawley.

"And thus I applot the mulct: I divide
The land throughout Clan Barrett on every side
Equally, that no place
May be without the face
Of a foe of Wattin's race —
That the pride
Of the Barretts
May be humbled hence forever throughout Tirawley.

"I adjudge a seat in every Barrett's hall
To MacWilliam; in every stable I give a stall
To MacWilliam; and, beside,
Whenever a Burke shall ride
Through Tirawley, I provide
At his call
Needful grooming,
Without charge from any hosteler of Tirawley.

"Thus lawfully I avenge me for the throes
Ye lawlessly caused me and caused those
Unhappy shamefaced ones
Who, their mothers expected once,
Would have been the sires of sons —
O'er whose woes
Often weeping,
I have groaned in my exile from Tirawley.

"I demand not of you your manhood; but I take —
For the Burkes will take it — your Freedom! for the sake
Of which all manhood's given
And all good under heaven,
And, without which, better even
Ye should make
Yourselves barren,
Than see your children slaves throughout Tirawley!

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252. **Brehons,** an ancient class of Irish lawyers or judges.
256. **eric,** a fine paid in Ireland to the family of a murdered person by the murderer.

270. **applot,** apportion. 277. **mulct,** fine.

"Neither take I your eyesight from you; as you took
Mine and ours. I would have you daily look
On one another's eyes
When the strangers tyrannize
By your hearths, and blushes arise,
That ye brook,
Without vengeance,
The insults of troops of Tibbots throughout Tirawley!

"The vengeance I designed, now is done,
And the days of me and mine nearly run —
For, for this, I have broken faith,
Teaching him who lies beneath
This pall, to merit death;
And my son
To his father
Stands pledged for other teaching in Tirawley."

Said MacWilliam — "Father and son, hang them high!"
And the Lynott they hanged speedily;
But across the salt sea water,
To Scotland, with the daughter
Of MacWilliam — well you got her! —
Did you fly,
Edmund Lindsay,
The gentlest of all the Welshmen of Tirawley!

'Tis thus the ancient Ollaves of Erin tell
How, through lewdness and revenge, it befell
That the sons of William Conquer
Came over the sons of Wattin,
Throughout all the bounds and borders
Of the lands of Auley MacFiachra;
Till the Saxon Oliver Cromwell,
And his valiant, Bible-guided,
Free heretics of Clan London,
Coming in, in their succession,
Rooted out both Burke and Barrett,
And in their empty places
New stems of freedom planted,
With many a goodly sapling
Of manliness and virtue;
Which while their children cherish,
Kindly Irish of the Irish,
Neither Saxons nor Italians,
May the mighty God of Freedom
Speed them well,
Never taking
Further vengeance on his people of Tirawley.

(1864)

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337. **Ollaves of Erin**, ancient Irish poets who recorded the history of the country. 343 ff. **Cromwell**, etc. Cromwell was the leader of the Puritan forces against the Royalists. An Irish rebellion was put down by Cromwell and his forces in 1649, but it took two years to subjugate the country. The Celtic owners were deprived of their land in Leinster, Munster, and Ulster, and were given holdings in Connaught, the county in which the incidents of this poem took place. The land of the Celts was given to the generals and soldiers and to those who furnished money for Cromwell's army.

## WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN
(1813-1865)

### THE BROKEN PITCHER

It was a Moorish maiden was sitting by a well,
And what the maiden thought of, I cannot, cannot tell,
When by there rode a valiant knight from the town of Oviedo,
Alphonzo Guzman was he hight, the Count of Tololedo.

"Oh, maiden, Moorish maiden! why sitt'st thou by the spring?
Say, dost thou seek a lover, or any other thing?
Why dost thou look upon me, with eyes so dark and wide,
And wherefore doth the pitcher lie broken by thy side?"

"I do not seek a lover, thou Christian knight so gay,
Because an article like that hath never come my way;
And why I gaze upon you, I cannot, cannot tell,
Except that in your iron hose you look uncommon swell.

"My pitcher it is broken, and this the reason is —
A shepherd came behind me, and tried to snatch a kiss;
I would not stand his nonsense, so ne'er a word I spoke,
But scored him on the costard, and so the jug was broke.

"My uncle, the Alcaydè, he waits for me at home,
And will not take his tumbler until Zorayda come;
I cannot bring him water — the pitcher is in pieces —
And so I'm sure to catch it, 'cos he wallops all his nieces."

"Oh maiden, Moorish maiden! wilt thou be ruled by me?
Then wipe thine eyes and rosy lips, and give me kisses three;
And I'll give thee my helmet, thou kind and courteous lady,

---

*The Broken Pitcher.* The scene of this poem is located in Spain, conquered by the Moors from North Africa in 711. The Moors established a Mohammedan power in Spain that lasted more than seven hundred years.

3. **Oviedo**, a city in northwestern Spain. 4. **hight**, called. **Tololedo**, Toledo, a city and province in central Spain. 16. **costard**, head. 17. **Alcaydè**, a commander of a castle or fortress.

To carry home the water to thy uncle, the
Alcaydè."

He lighted down from off his steed — he tied
him to a tree —
He bent him to the maiden, and he took his
kisses three;
"To wrong thee, sweet Zorayda, I swear
would be a sin!"
And he knelt him at the fountain, and he
dipped his helmet in.

Up rose the Moorish maiden — behind the
knight she steals,
And caught Alphonzo Guzman in a twinkling
by the heels;
She tipped him in, and held him down beneath the bubbling water —
"Now take thou that for venturing to kiss
Al Hamet's daughter!"

A Christian maid is weeping in the town of
Oviedo;
She waits the coming of her love, the Count
of Tololedo.
I pray you all in charity that you will never
tell
How he met the Moorish maiden beside the
lonely well. (1841)

## THE OLD SCOTTISH CAVALIER

Come listen to another song,
Should make your heart beat high,
Bring crimson to your forehead,
And the luster to your eye;
It is a song of olden time,
Of days long since gone by,
And of a baron stout and bold
As e'er wore sword on thigh!
Like a brave old Scottish cavalier,
All of the olden time!

He kept his castle in the north,
Hard by the thundering Spey;
And a thousand vassals dwelt around,
All of his kindred they.
And not a man of all that clan
Had ever ceased to pray
For the royal race they loved so well,
Though exiled far away
From the steadfast Scottish cavaliers,
All of the olden time!

His father drew the righteous sword
For Scotland and her claims,
Among the loyal gentlemen
And chiefs of ancient names
Who swore to fight or fall beneath
The standard of King James,
And died at Killiecrankie Pass
With the glory of the Graemes;
Like a true old Scottish cavalier
All of the olden time!

He never owned the foreign rule,
No master he obeyed,
But kept his clan in peace at home,
From foray and from raid;
And when they asked him for his oath,
He touched his glittering blade,
And pointed to his bonnet blue,
That bore the white cockade;
Like a leal old Scottish cavalier,
All of the olden time!

At length the news ran through the land —
The PRINCE had come again!
That night the fiery cross was sped
O'er mountain and through glen;
And our old baron rose in might,
Like a lion from his den,
And rode away across the hills
To Charlie and his men,
With the valiant Scottish cavaliers,
All of the olden time!

He was the first that bent the knee
When the standard waved abroad,
He was the first that charged the foe
On Preston's bloody sod;
And ever, in the van of fight,
The foremost still he trod,
Until on bleak Culloden's heath,
He gave his soul to God,
Like a good old Scottish cavalier,
All of the olden time!

Oh! never shall we know again
A heart so stout and true —
The olden times have passed away,
And weary are the new;
The fair White Rose has faded

---

*The Old Scottish Cavalier*. The hero of this poem was Alexander Forbes, Lord Pitsligo (1677-1762), an ardent supporter of the Stuarts and the leader of a force that supported Prince Charles Edward Stuart (1720-88), the Young Pretender, when he landed in Scotland in 1745 in an effort to gain the English throne. The royal race of Stuarts (line 17) had been forced to live in exile since the accession of William III, Prince of Orange, in 1688. The Jacobite clans in Scotland refused to swear allegiance to this foreign prince (line 31) and continued loyal to the Stuarts. The Jacobite forces defeated the royalists at Preston Pans, Inverness, in 1745, but suffered a crushing and final defeat at Culloden in 1746. Cf. Macaulay's *Epitaph on a Jacobite*, page 10, and Swinburne's *A Jacobite's Farewell*, page 714.

12. **Spey**, a river in northern Scotland.

26. **King James**, James II, king of England (1685-88); he was James VII of Scotland. 27. **Killiecrankie Pass**, a pass in Perthshire, Scotland, the scene of a victory of the Jacobite Highlanders over the forces of William III in 1689. The Highland clans were led by John Graham ("the glory of the Graemes," line 28) of Claverhouse, who was killed in the battle. 38. **white cockade**, the badge of the House of Stuart and of its adherents. 39. **leal**, loyal. 43. **fiery cross**, a stake with one end burned and the other dipped in blood as an emblem of fire and sword. It was carried among the Highlanders of Scotland to summon the clans to a rendezvous. 65. **White Rose**, the white cockade. (See note on line 38.)

From the garden where it grew,
And no fond tears, save those of heaven,
The glorious bed bedew
Of the last old Scottish cavalier,
All of the olden time!
(1852)

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY
(1811-1863)

### THE CANE-BOTTOMED CHAIR

In tattered old slippers that toast at the bars,
And a ragged old jacket perfumed with cigars,
Away from the world and its toils and its cares,
I've a snug little kingdom up four pair of stairs.

To mount to this realm is a toil, to be sure,
But the fire there is bright and the air rather pure;
And the view I behold on a sunshiny day
Is grand, through the chimney-pots over the way.

This snug little chamber is crammed in all nooks
With worthless old knicknacks and silly old books,
And foolish old odds and foolish old ends,
Cracked bargains from brokers, cheap keepsakes from friends.

Old armor, prints, pictures, pipes, china (all cracked),
Old rickety tables, and chairs broken-backed;
A twopenny treasury, wondrous to see;
What matter? 'tis pleasant to you, friend, and me.

No better divan need the Sultan require,
Than the creaking old sofa that basks by the fire;
And 'tis wonderful, surely, what music you get
From the rickety, ramshackle, wheezy spinet.

That praying-rug came from a Turcoman's camp;
By Tiber once twinkled that brazen old lamp;
A Mameluke fierce yonder dagger has drawn —
'Tis a murderous knife to toast muffins upon.

Long, long through the hours, and the night, and the chimes,
Here we talk of old books, and old friends, and old times;
As we sit in a fog made of rich Latakie,
This chamber is pleasant to you, friend, and me.

But of all the cheap treasures that garnish my nest,
There's one that I love and I cherish the best;
For the finest of couches that's padded with hair
I would never change thee, my cane-bottomed chair.

'Tis a bandy-legged, high-shouldered, worm-eaten seat,
With a creaking old back, and twisted old feet;
But since the fair morning when Fanny sat there,
I bless thee and love thee, old cane-bottomed chair.

If chairs have but feeling, in holding such charms,
A thrill must have passed through your withered old arms!
I looked, and I longed, and I wished in despair;
I wished myself turned to a cane-bottomed chair.

It was but a moment she sat in this place,
She'd a scarf on her neck, and a smile on her face!
A smile on her face, and a rose in her hair,
And she sat there and bloomed in my cane-bottomed chair.

And so I have valued my chair ever since,
Like the shrine of a saint, or the throne of a prince.
Saint Fanny, my patroness sweet I declare,
The queen of my heart and my cane-bottomed chair.

When the candles burn low, and the company's gone,
In the silence of night as I sit here alone —
I sit here alone, but we yet are a pair —
My Fanny I see in my cane-bottomed chair.

She comes from the past and revisits my room;
She looks as she then did, all beauty and bloom;

---

*The Cane-Bottomed Chair.* 8. **chimney-pots**, pipes of earthenware, brick, or sheet-metal placed on top of chimneys to prevent smoking. 21. **Turcoman**, an Asiatic Turk. 22. **Tiber**, the chief river of Italy. 23. **Mameluke**, an Egyptian soldier recruited from slaves converted to Mohammedanism.

27. **Latakie**, a superior kind of Turkish smoking tobacco.

So smiling and tender, so fresh and so fair,
And yonder she sits in my cane-bottomed chair.

(1847)

## LITTLE BILLEE

AIR — "Il y avait un petit navire."

There were three sailors of Bristol city
Who took a boat and went to sea.
But first with beef and captain's biscuits
And pickled pork they loaded she.

There was gorging Jack and guzzling Jimmy,
And the youngest he was little Billee.
Now when they got as far as the Equator
They'd nothing left but one split pea.

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"I am extremely hungaree."
To gorging Jack says guzzling Jimmy,
"We've nothing left, us must eat we."

Says gorging Jack to guzzling Jimmy,
"With one another we shouldn't agree!
There's little Bill, he's young and tender;
We're old and tough, so let's eat he.

"Oh! Billy, we're going to kill and eat you,
So undo the button of your chemie."
When Bill received this information
He used his pocket handkerchie.

"First let me say my catechism,
Which my poor mammy taught to me."
"Make haste, make haste," says guzzling Jimmy,
While Jack pulled out his snickersnee.

So Billy went up to the main-top gallant mast,
And down he fell on his bended knee.
He scarce had come to the twelfth commandment
When up he jumps. "There's land I see:

"Jerusalem and Madagascar,
And North and South Amerikee;
There's the British flag a-riding at anchor,
With Admiral Napier, K. C. B."

So when they got aboard of the Admiral's,
He hanged fat Jack and flogged Jimmee;
But as for little Bill he made him
The Captain of a Seventy-three.

(1849)

## THE BALLAD OF BOUILLABAISSE

A street there is in Paris famous,
For which no rime our language yields,
Rue Neuve des Petits Champs its name is —
The New Street of the Little Fields.
And here's an inn, not rich and splendid,
But still in comfortable case;
The which in youth I oft attended,
To eat a bowl of Bouillabaisse.

This Bouillabaisse a noble dish is —
A sort of soup or broth, or brew,
Or hotchpotch of all sorts of fishes,
That Greenwich never could outdo;
Green herbs, red peppers, mussels, saffron,
Soles, onions, garlic, roach, and dace:
All these you eat at Terré's tavern,
In that one dish of Bouillabaisse.

Indeed, a rich and savory stew 'tis;
And true philosophers, methinks,
Who love all sorts of natural beauties,
Should love good victuals and good drinks.
And Cordelier or Benedictine
Might gladly, sure, his lot embrace,
Nor find a fast-day too afflicting,
Which served him up a Bouillabaisse.

I wonder if the house still there is?
Yes, here the lamp is, as before;
The smiling red-cheeked écaillère is
Still opening oysters at the door.
Is Terré still alive and able?
I recollect his droll grimace;
He'd come and smile before your table,
And hope you liked your Bouillabaisse.

We enter — nothing's changed or older.
"How's Monsieur Terré, waiter, pray?"
The waiter stares and shrugs his shoulder —
"Monsieur is dead this many a day."
"It is the lot of saint and sinner.
So honest Terré's run his race!"
"What will Monsieur require for dinner?"
"Say, do you still cook Bouillabaisse?"

"Oh, oui, Monsieur," 's the waiter's answer;
"Quel vin Monsieur désire-t-il?"
"Tell me a good one." — "That I can, Sir:
The Chambertin with yellow seal."
"So Terré's gone," I say, and sink in
My old accustomed corner-place;
"He's done with feasting and with drinking,
With Burgundy and Bouillabaisse."

---

*Little Billee.* This poem is meant as a satire on certain conventional sea tales. Air—"There was a little ship"; this is the title of a popular ballad.

24. **snickersnee,** knife. 32. **Napier,** Sir Charles Napier (1786-1860), an English admiral, Knight Commander of the Bath. 36. **Seventy-three,** an old-time ship of war carrying seventy-three guns—that is, a large man-of-war.

*The Ballad of Bouillabaisse.* 12. **Greenwich,** a borough of London, once famous for the annual fish dinner held there by members of the British Cabinet. 14. **roach and dace,** kinds of fish. 21. **Cordelier,** a Franciscan monk, so called from his girdle of knotted cord. **Benedictine,** a monk of the order of St. Benedict. 27. **écaillère,** oyster-woman. 42. **Quel vin,** etc., what wine do you wish, sir? 44. **Chambertin,** a kind of Burgundy wine.

My old accustomed corner here is —
The table still is in the nook;
Ah! vanished many a busy year is
This well-known chair since last I took.
When first I saw ye, *cari luoghi*,
I'd scarce a beard upon my face,
And now a grizzled, grim old fogy,
I sit and wait for Bouillabaisse.

Where are you, old companions trusty
Of early days here met to dine?
Come, waiter! quick, a flagon crusty —
I'll pledge them in the good old wine.
The kind old voices and old faces
My memory can quick retrace;
Around the board they take their places,
And share the wine and Bouillabaisse.

There's Jack has made a wondrous marriage;
There's laughing Tom is laughing yet;
There's brave Augustus drives his carriage;
There's poor old Fred in the *Gazette;*
On James's head the grass is growing.
Good Lord! the world has wagged apace
Since here we set the Claret flowing,
And drank, and ate the Bouillabaisse.

Ah me! how quick the days are flitting!
I mind me of a time that's gone,
When here I'd sit, as now I'm sitting,
In this same place — but not alone.
A fair young form was nestled near me,
A dear, dear face looked fondly up,
And sweetly spoke and smiled to cheer me.
— There's no one now to share my cup.

. . . . .

I drink it as the Fates ordain it.
Come, fill it, and have done with rimes;
Fill up the lonely glass, and drain it
In memory of dear old times.
Welcome the wine, whate'er the seal is;
And sit you down and say your grace
With thankful heart, whate'er the meal is.
— Here comes the smoking Bouillabaisse!
(1849)

## From REBECCA AND ROWENA

### Love at Two Score

Ho! pretty page, with the dimpled chin,
That never has known the barber's shear,
All your wish is woman to win;
This is the way that boys begin —
Wait till you come to forty year.

Curly gold locks cover foolish brains,
Billing and cooing is all your cheer;
Sighing and singing of midnight strains
Under Bonnybell's window-panes —
Wait till you come to forty year!

Forty times over let Michaelmas pass,
Grizzling hair the brain doth clear;
Then you know a boy is an ass,
Then you know the worth of a lass,
Once you have come to forty year.

Pledge me round; I bid ye declare,
All good fellows whose beards are gray,
Did not the fairest of the fair
Common grow and wearisome, ere
Ever a month was passed away?

The reddest lips that ever have kissed,
The brightest eyes that ever have shone,
May pray and whisper and we not list,
Or look away and never be missed,
Ere yet ever a month is gone.

Gillian's dead, God rest her bier —
How I loved her twenty years syne!
Marian's married; but I sit here,
Alive and merry at forty year,
Dipping my nose in the Gascon wine.
(1850)

## SORROWS OF WERTHER

Werther had a love for Charlotte
Such as words could never utter;
Would you know how first he met her?
She was cutting bread and butter.

Charlotte was a married lady,
And a moral man was Werther,
And, for all the wealth of Indies,
Would do nothing for to hurt her.

So he sighed and pined and ogled,
And his passion boiled and bubbled,
Till he blew his silly brains out,
And no more was by it troubled.

Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter. (1855)

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53. **cari luoghi**, dear places. 68. **Fred in the Gazette.** His name appeared in the list of bankrupts published in the London *Gazette*.

*Rebecca and Rowena.* This is a burlesque postscript to *Ivanhoe* with the subtitle *A Romance upon Romance.* This poem, from Chapter 4, is sung by Wamba, the Jester.

11. **Michaelmas**, the feast of the archangel Michael, a church festival celebrated on September 29. It is one of the four quarter (or rent) days of the year in England. 27. **syne**, since, ago. 30. **Gascon wine**, wine made in Gascony, a province in southwestern France.

*Sorrows of Werther.* Werther is the sentimental hero of Goethe's romance *The Sorrows of Werther* (1774). He was so overcome by his unrequited love for Lotte that he took his life. Thackeray is burlesquing the famous scene of Werther's death.

# AUBREY THOMAS DE VERE
(1814-1902)

## EPITAPH

He roamed half-round the world of woe,
Where toil and labor never cease;
Then dropped one little span below
In search of peace.

And now to him mild beams and showers,
All that he needs to grace his tomb,
From loneliest regions at all hours,
Unsought-for, come. (1842)

## THE SUN-GOD

I saw the Master of the Sun. He stood
High in his luminous car, himself more bright —
An Archer of immeasurable might.
On his left shoulder hung his quivered load;
Spurned by his steeds the eastern mountains glowed;
Forward his eagle eye and bow of Light
He bent, and while both hands that arch embowed,
Shaft after shaft pursued the flying night.
No wings profaned that godlike form; around
His neck high-held an ever-moving crowd
Of locks hung glistening, while such perfect sound
Fell from his bowstring that th' ethereal dome
Thrilled as a dew-drop; and each passing cloud
Expanded, whitening like the ocean foam.
(1843)

## From *MAY CAROLS*

### Mater Christi

He willed to lack; He willed to bear;
He willed by suffering to be schooled;
He willed the chains of flesh to wear:
Yet from her arms the worlds He ruled.

As tapers 'mid the noontide glow
With merged yet separate radiance burn,
With human taste and touch, even so,
The things He knew He willed to learn.

He sat beside the lowly door;
His homeless eyes appeared to trace
In evening skies remembered lore,
And shadows of His Father's face.

One only knew Him. She alone
Who nightly to His cradle crept,
And lying like the moonbeams prone,
Worshiped her Maker as He slept. (1857)

### Turris Eburnea

This scheme of worlds, which vast we call,
Is only vast compared with man;
Compared with God, the One yet All,
Its greatness dwindles to a span.

A Lily with its isles of buds
Asleep on some unmeasured sea —
O God, the starry multitudes,
What are they more than this to Thee?

Yet girt by Nature's petty pale
Each tenant holds the place assigned
To each in Being's awful scale —
The last of creatures leaves behind

The abyss of nothingness; the first
Into the abyss of Godhead peers,
Waiting that vision which shall burst
In glory on the eternal years.

Tower of our Hope! through thee we climb
Finite creation's topmost stair;
Through thee from Sion's height sublime
Toward God we gaze through purer air.

Infinite distance still divides
Created from Creative Power;
But all which intercepts and hides
Lies dwarfed by that surpassing Tower!
(1857)

### Fest. Puritatis

Cloud-piercing mountains! Chance and Change
More high than you their thrones advance.
Self-vanquished Nature's rockiest range
Gives way before them like the trance

Of one that wakes. From morn to eve
Through fissured clefts her mists make way;
At Night's cold touch they freeze, and cleave
Her crags; and, with a Titan's sway,

Flake off and peel the rotting rocks,
And heap the glacier tide below
With isles of sand and floating blocks,
As leaves on streams when tempests blow.

Lo, thus the great decree all-just,
O Earth, thy mountains hear; and learn

---

*The Sun God.* The sun-god is Phœbus Apollo.

*May Carols.* This is a series of poems on the Christian mystery of the Incarnation and on devotion to Mary as the Mother of Christ. De Vere was urged to write such a collection by Pope Pius IX (1846-78).

*Mater Christi.* The title means *Mother of Christ.*

*Turris Eburnea.* The title means *The Ivory Tower.* This is an imaginary structure conceived of as an ideal of beauty and symmetry. Cf. *Song of Solomon,* 7:4.—"Thy neck is as a tower of ivory."

19. **Sion's height,** the heavenly Jerusalem.

*Fest. Puritatis.* The title means *Festival of the Purification.* This is a feast in commemoration of the ceremonial purification of the Virgin Mary, celebrated on February 2. See *Leviticus,* 12, and *Luke,* 2:22.

From fire and frost its import—"Dust
Thou art; and shalt to dust return."

He only *is* Who ever was—
The All-measuring Mind, the Will Supreme,
Rocks, mountains, worlds, like bubbles pass;
God is; the things not God but seem.
(1857)

## SONG

Seek not the tree of silkiest bark
And balmiest bud
To carve her name, while yet 'tis dark,
Upon the wood!
The world is full of noble tasks,
And wreaths hard won;
Each work demands strong hearts, strong hands,
Till day is done.

Sing not that violet-veinéd skin,
That cheek's pale roses;
The lily of that form wherein
Her soul reposes!
Forth to the fight, true man! true knight!
The clash of arms
Shall more prevail than whispered tale
To win her charms.

The warrior for the True, the Right,
Fights in Love's name;
The love that lures thee from the fight
Lures thee to shame:
That love which lifts the heart, yet leaves
The spirit free—
That love, or none, is fit for one
Man-shaped like thee.

## WILLIAM BARNES (1801-1886)

### EASTER ZUNDAY

Last Easter Jim put on his blue
Frock cwoat, the vu'st time—vier new;
Wi' yollow buttons all o' brass,
That glittered in the zun lik' glass;
An' poked 'ithin the button-hole
A tutty he'd a-begged or stole.
A span-new wes'cot, too, he wore,
Wi' yollow stripes all down avore;
An' tied his breeches' lags below
The knee, wi' ribbon in a bow;
An' drowed his kitty-boots azide,
An' put his laggéns on, an' tied
His shoes wi' strings two vingers wide,
Because 'twer Easter Zunday.

An' after mornén church wer out
He come back hwome, an' strolled about
All down the vields, an' drough the leäne,
Wi' sister Kit an' cousin Jeäne,
A-turnén proudly to their view
His yollow breast an' back o' blue.
The lambs did play, the grounds wer green,
The trees did bud, the zun did sheen;
The lark did zing below the sky,
An' roads wer all a-blown so dry,
As if the zummer wer begun;
An' he had sich a bit o' fun!
He meäde the maïdens squeäl an' run,
Because 'twer Easter Zunday. (1844)

### EASTER MONDAY

An' zoo o' Monday we got drough
Our work betimes, an axed a vew
Young vo'k vrom Stowe an' Coom, an' zome
Vrom uncle's down at Grange, to come.
An' they so spry, wi' merry smiles,
Did beät the path an leäp the stiles,
Wi' two or dree young chaps bezide,
To meet an' keep up Easter tide;
Vor we'd a-zaid avore, we'd git
Zome friends to come, an' have a bit
O' fun wi' me, an' Jeäne, an' Kit,
Because 'twer Easter Monday.

An' there we played away at quaïts,
An' weighed ourzelves wi' sceäles an' waïghts;
An' jumped to zee who jumped the spryest,
An' sprung the vurdest an' the highest;
An' rung the bells vor vull an hour,
An' played at vives ageän the tower.
An' then we went an' had a taït,
An' cousin Sammy, wi' his waïght,
Broke off the bar, he wer so fat!
An' toppled off, an' vell down flat
Upon his head, an' squot his hat,
Because 'twer Easter Monday. (1844)

### THE GIRT WOAK TREE THAT'S IN THE DELL

The girt woak tree that's in the dell!
There's noo tree I do love so well;
Vor times an' times when I wer young,
I there've a-climbed, an' there've a-zwung,
An' picked the eäcorns green, a-shed
In wrestlén storms vrom his broad head.
An' down below's the cloty brook
Where I did vish with line an' hook,

---

15-16. **Dust . . . return.** From *Ecclesiastes*, 3:20.—"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

*Easter Zunday.* Many of Barnes's poems are written in the Dorset dialect.

2. **vu'st**, first. **vier new**, fire new, brand new. 6. **tutty**, flower. 11. **drowed**, threw. **kitty-boots**, a kind of laced boots reaching up only over the ankles.

17. **drough the leäne**, through the lane.

*Easter Monday.* 1. **zoo**, so. 3. **zome**, some. 18. **vives**, a game like handball. 19. **taït**, a game of see-saw.

*The Girt Woak Tree That's in the Dell.* **Girt woak**, great oak.

6. **wrestlén**, wrestling. 7. **cloty**, covered with water-lilies.

An' beät, in plaÿsome dips and zwims,
The foamy stream, wi' white-skinned lim's.
An' there my mother nimbly shot
Her knittén-needles, as she zot
At evenén down below the wide
Woak's head, wi' father at her zide.
An' I've a-plaÿed wi' many a bwoy,
That's now a man an' gone awoy;
Zoo I do like noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' there, in leäter years, I roved
Wi' thik poor maïd I fondly loved —
The maïd too feäir to die so soon —
When evenén twilight, or the moon,
Cast light enough 'ithin the pleäce
To show the smiles upon her feäce,
Wi' eyes so clear's the glassy pool,
An' lips an' cheäks so soft as wool.
There han' in han', wi' bosoms warm,
Wi' love that burned but thought noo harm,
Below the wide-boughed tree we past
The happy hours that went too vast;
An' though she'll never be my wife,
She's still my leäden star o' life.
She's gone, an' she've a-left to me
Her mem'ry in the girt woak tree;
Zoo I do love noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

An' oh! mid never ax nor hook
Be brought to spweil his steätely look;
Nor ever roun' his ribby zides
Mid cattle rub ther heäiry hides;
Nor pigs rout up his turf, but keep
His lwonesome sheäde vor harmless sheep;
An' let en grow, an' let en spread,
An' let en live when I be dead.
But oh! if men should come an' vell
The girt woak tree that's in the dell,
An' build his planks 'ithin the zide
O' some girt ship to plow the tide,
Then, life or death! I'd goo to sea,
A saïlén wi' the girt woak tree;
An' I upon his planks would stand,
An' die a-fightén vor the land —
The land so dear — the land so free —
The land that bore the girt woak tree;
Vor I do love noo tree so well
'S the girt woak tree that's in the dell.

(1844)

## JEANE'S WEDDEN DAY IN MORNEN

At last Jeäne come down stairs, a-drest
Wi' weddén knots upon her breast,
A-blushén, while a tear did lie
Upon her burnén cheäk half dry;
An' then her Robert, drawén nigh
Wi' tothers, took her han' wi' pride,
To meäke her at the church his bride,
Her weddén day in mornén.

Wi' litty voot an' beätén heart
She stepped up in the new light cart,
An' took her bridemaïd up to ride
Along wi' Robert at her zide;
An' uncle's meäre looked roun' wi' pride
To zee that, if the cart wer vull,
'Twer Jenny that he had to pull,
Her weddén day in mornén.

An' aunt an' uncle stood stock-still,
An' watched em trottén down the hill;
An' when they turned off out o' groun'
Down into leäne, two tears run down
Aunt's feäce; an' uncle, turnén roun',
Sighed woonce, an' stumped off wi' his stick,
Because did touch en to the quick
To peärt wi' Jeäne thik mornén.

"Now Jeäne's agone," Tom muttered, "we
Shall mwope lik' owls 'ithin a tree;
Vor she did zet us all agog
Vor fun, avore the burnén log."
An' as he zot an' talked, the dog
Put up his nose athirt his thighs,
But coulden meäke en turn his eyes,
Jeäne's weddén day in mornén.

An' then the naïghbors round us, all
By woones an' twos begun to call,
To meet the young vo'k, when the meäre
Mid bring em back a married peäir;
An' all o'm zaid, to Robert's sheäre,
There had a-vell the feärest feäce,
An' kindest heart in all the pleäce,
Jeäne's weddén day in mornén. (1844)

## THE WOODLANDS

O spread agen your leaves an' flow'rs,
Luonesome woodlands! zunny woodlands!
Here underneath the dewy show'rs
O' warm-aired spring-time, zunny woodlands!
As when, in drong or oben groun',
Wi' happy buoyish heart I voun'
The twitt'ren birds a-builden roun'
Your high-boughed hedges, zunny woodlands!

Ya gie'd me life, ya gie'd me jay,
Luonesome woodlands! zunny woodlands!
Ya gie'd me health, as in my play

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20. **thik**, that. 32. **leäden**, leading. 37. **mid**, might. 38. **spweil**, spoil. 43. **en**, him. 45. **vell**, fell, cut down.

9. **litty voot**, lightsome foot. 14. **vull**, full. 23. **en**, him. 24. **peärt**, part. **thik**, that. 30. **athirt**, athwart. 36. **Mid**, might. 38. **a-vell**, fallen.

*The Woodlands.* 5. **drong or oben groun'**, lane or open field. 6. **voun'**, found. 9. **gie'd**, gave.

I rambled droo ye, zunny woodlands!
Ya gie’d me freedom var to rove
In airy mead or sheädy grove;
Ya gie’d me smilen Fanny’s love,
The best ov all o’t, zunny woodlands!

My vust shill skylark whivered high,
Luonesome woodlands! zunny woodlands!
To zing below your deep-blue sky
An’ white spring-clouds, O zunny woodlands!
An’ boughs o’ trees that oonce stood here,
Wer glossy green the happy year
That gie’d me oon I loved so dear,
An’ now ha’ lost, O zunny woodlands!

O let me rove agen unspied,
Luonesome woodlands! zunny woodlands!
Along your green-boughed hedges’ zide,
As then I rambled, zunny woodlands!
An’ where the missén trees oonce stood,
Or tongues oonce rung among the wood,
My memory shall miäke em good,
Though you’ve a-lost em, zunny woodlands!

(1844)

## BLACKMWORE MAIDENS

The primrwose in the sheäde do blow,
The cowslip in the zun,
The thyme upon the down do grow,
The clote where streams do run;
An’ where do pretty maïdens grow
An’ blow, but where the tow’r
Do rise among the bricken tuns,
In Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you could zee their comely gaït,
An’ pretty feäces’ smiles,
A-trippén on so light o’ waïght,
An’ steppén off the stiles;
A-gwaïn to church, as bells do swing
An’ ring ’ithin the tow’r,
You’d own the pretty maïdens’ pleäce
Is Blackmwore by the Stour.

If you vrom Wimborne took your road,
To Stower or Paladore,
An’ all the farmers’ housen showed
Their daeters at the door,
You’d cry to bachelors at hwome —
“Here, come; ’ithin an hour
You’ll vind ten maïdens to your mind,
In Blackmwore by the Stour.”
An’ if you looked ’ithin their door,
To zee ’em in their pleäce,
A-doén housework up avore
Their smilén mother’s feäce,
You’d cry — “Why, if a man would wive
An’ thrive, ’ithout a dow’r,
Then let en look en out a wife
In Blackmwore by the Stour.”

As I upon my road did pass
A school-house back in Maÿ,
There out upon the beäten grass
Wer maïdens at their plaÿ;
An’ as the pretty souls did twile
An’ smile, I cried, “The flow’r
O’ beauty, then, is still in bud
In Blackmwore by the Stour.”

(1859)

## THE SURPRISE

As there I left the road in May,
And took my way along a ground,
I found a glade with girls at play,
By leafy boughs close-hemmed around,
And there, with stores of harmless joys,
They plied their tongues, in merry noise;
Though little did they seem to fear
So queer a stranger might be near;
*Teeh-hee! Look here! Hah! ha! Look there!*
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

And one would dance as one would spring,
Or bob or bow with leering smiles,
And one would swing, or sit and sing,
Or sew a stitch or two at whiles,
And one skipped on with downcast face,
All heedless, to my very place,
And there, in fright, with one foot out,
Made one dead step and turned about.
*Heeh, hee, oh! oh! ooh! oo! — Look there!*
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

Away they scampered all, full speed,
By boughs that swung along their track,
As rabbits out of wood at feed,
At sight of men all scamper back.
And one pulled on behind her heel,
A thread of cotton, off her reel,
And oh! to follow that white clue,
I felt I fain could scamper too.
*Teeh, hee, run here. Eeh! ee! Look there!*
And oh! so playsome, oh! so fair.

(1869)

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12. **droo**, through. 17. **vust shill**, first shrill. **whivered**, hovered. 29. **missén**, missing.

*Blackmwore Maidens.* Blackmoor is a hamlet in East Somerset; it is on the Stour River, which flows through Somerset and Dorset.

4. **clote**, water lily. 7. **bricken tuns**, chimneys made of bricks. 17. **Wimborne**, a town in Dorset, on the Stour River. 18. **Stower, Paladore.** East Stower and West Stower are villages about twenty miles northwest of Wimborne; Paladore is an old name for Shaftesbury, in North Dorset.

37. **twile**, move about.

### THE MOTHER'S DREAM

I'd a dream tonight
As I fell asleep —
Oh! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep —
Of my little lad,
Gone to leave me sad,
Aye, the child I had,
But was not to keep.

As in heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh! it did not burn;
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half turned about,
"Your tears put it out;
Mother, never mourn." (1869)

### THE BROKEN JUG

#### JENNY AND TOM

*(Tom idly swings about Jenny's jug, and breaks it against a stone.)*

*J.* As if you could not leave the jug alone!
Now you have smacked my jug;
Now you have whacked my jug;
Now you have cracked my jug,
Against the stone.

*T.* The jug was cracked before, unknown to you;
So don't belie the stone.
It scarce went nigh the stone;
It just went by the stone,
And broke in two.

*J.* Oh! cracked before! no! that was sound enough,
From back to lip was sound,
To stand or tip was sound,
To hold or dip, was sound.
Don't talk such stuff.

*T.* How high then must I take its price to reach?
I'd buy some more as good;
I'd buy a score as good;
I'd buy a store as good;
For twopence each.

*J.* Indeed; when stonen jugs are sold so dear!
No, there's a tap for lies;
And there's a slap for lies;
And there's a rap for lies,
About your ear.

*T.* Oh! there are pretty hands! a little dear!
(1869)

## CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-1875)

### AIRLY BEACON

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh, the pleasant sight to see
Shires and towns from Airly Beacon,
While my love climbed up to me!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh, the happy hours we lay
Deep in fern on Airly Beacon,
Courting through the summer's day!

Airly Beacon, Airly Beacon;
Oh, the weary haunt for me,
All alone on Airly Beacon,
With his baby on my knee! (*1847*)

### From *THE SAINT'S TRAGEDY*

#### WHEN I WAS A GREENHORN AND YOUNG

When I was a greenhorn and young,
And wanted to be and to do,
I puzzled my brains about choosing my line,
Till I found out the way that things go.

The same piece of clay makes a tile,
A pitcher, a taw, or a brick.
Dan Horace knew life; you may cut out a saint,
Or a bench, from the selfsame stick.

The urchin who squalls in a gaol,
By circumstance turns out a rogue;
While the castle-born brat is a senator born,
Or a saint, if religion's in vogue.

We fall on our legs in this world,
Blind kittens, tossed in neck and heels;

---

*Airly Beacon.* This poem may refer to a hill in the parish of Airlie, Forfarshire, Scotland, formerly used as a signal station.

*The Saint's Tragedy.* This is a drama of the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. The song given here is sung by the Fool to offset a song sung by one of the Saint's ladies who had learned it from a nun, formerly a shepherdess.

6. **taw**, a marble used as a shooter. 7. **Horace**, a famous Latin poet (65-8 B.C.), whose *Satires* give a complete and vivid picture of the life of his period. The title *Dan* is from Latin *Dominus*, meaning *master*.

'Tis Dame Circumstance licks Nature's cubs into shape —
She's the mill-head, if we are the wheels.

Then why puzzle and fret, plot and dream?
He that's wise will just follow his nose;
Contentedly fish, while he swims with the stream;
'Tis no business of his where it goes.
(*1848;* 1848)

## From *ALTON LOCKE*

### THE SANDS OF DEE

"O Mary, go and call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home,
And call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee!"
The western wind was wild and dank with foam,
And all alone went she.

The western tide crept up along the sand,
And o'er and o'er the sand,
And round and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.
The rolling mist came down and hid the land —
And never home came she.

"Oh! is it weed, or fish, or floating hair —
A tress of golden hair,
A drownéd maiden's hair
Above the nets at sea?
Was never salmon yet that shone so fair
Among the stakes on Dee."

They rowed her in across the rolling foam,
The cruel crawling foam,
The cruel hungry foam,
To her grave beside the sea;
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home
Across the sands of Dee. (*1849;* 1850)

## THE THREE FISHERS

Three fishers went sailing away to the West,
Away to the West as the sun went down;
Each thought on the woman who loved him the best;
And the children stood watching them out of the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there's little to earn, and many to keep,
Though the harbor bar be moaning.

Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower,
And they trimmed the lamps as the sun went down;
They looked at the squall, and they looked at the shower,
And the night-rack came rolling up ragged and brown.
But men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden, and waters deep,
And the harbor bar be moaning.

Three corpses lay out on the shining sands
In the morning gleam as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their hands
For those who will never come home to the town;
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it's over, the sooner to sleep;
And good-by to the bar and its moaning.
(1851)

## DOLCINO TO MARGARET

The world goes up and the world goes down,
And the sunshine follows the rain;
And yesterday's sneer and yesterday's frown
Can never come over again,
Sweet wife;
No never come over again.

For woman is warm though man be cold,
And the night will hallow the day;
Till the heart which at even was weary and old
Can rise in the morning gay,
Sweet wife;
To its work in the morning gay. (1851)

## THE OUBIT

It was an hairy oubit, sae proud he crept alang;
A feckless hairy oubit, and merrily he sang —
"My Minnie bade me bide at hame until I won my wings;
I shew her soon my soul's aboon the warks o' creeping things."

---

*Alton Locke.* This is a novel presenting a study of industrial conditions in England. Because of its picture of Alton Locke and his radical Chartist friends, it won for Kingsley the title of "The Chartist Clergyman." See Meredith's *The Old Chartist,* page 592.

*The Sands of Dee.* The Dee is a river in England and North Wales. This song, from Chapter 26, was composed by Alton Locke (the purported author of the novel) after he had heard a song about a drowned girl.

20-21. **cruel . . . foam.** See Ruskin's comment on these lines in Critical Notes.

*Dolcino to Margaret.* Dolcino is a man's name. Compare the poem with Browning's *Parting at Morning,* page 205.

*The Oubit.* The oubit is a woobut, a hairy caterpillar.

2. **feckless,** worthless.

This feckless hairy oubit cam' hirpling by the linn,
A swirl o' wind cam' doun the glen, and blew that oubit in;
O when he took the water, the saumon fry they rose,
And tigged him a' to pieces sma', by head and tail and toes.

Tak' warning then, young poets a', by this poor oubit's shame;
Though Pegasus may nicher loud, keep Pegasus at hame.
O haud your hands frae inkhorns, though a' the Muses woo;
For critics lie, like saumon fry, to mak' their meals o' you.

(1851)

## A FAREWELL

### TO C. E. G.

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe in skies so dull and gray;
Yet, if you will, one quiet hint I'll leave you,
For every day.

I'll tell you how to sing a clearer carol
Than lark who hails the dawn or breezy down;
To earn yourself a purer poet's laurel
Than Shakespeare's crown.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever;
Do lovely things, not dream them, all day long;
And so make Life, and Death, and that For Ever,
One grand sweet song.

(1856)

## THE LAST BUCCANEER

Oh, England is a pleasant place for them that's rich and high;
But England is a cruel place for such poor folks as I;
And such a port for mariners I ne'er shall see again,
As the pleasant Isle of Avès, beside the Spanish main.

There were forty craft in Avès that were both swift and stout,
All furnished well with small arms and cannons round about;
And a thousand men in Avès made laws so fair and free
To choose their valiant captains and obey them loyally.

Thence we sailed against the Spaniard with his hoards of plate and gold,
Which he wrung by cruel tortures from Indian folk of old;
Likewise the merchant captains, with hearts as hard as stone,
Who flog men and keel-haul them, and starve them to the bone.

Oh, the palms grew high in Avès and fruits that shone like gold,
And the colibris and parrots they were gorgeous to behold;
And the negro maids to Avès from bondage fast did flee,
To welcome gallant sailors a-sweeping in from sea.

Oh, sweet it was in Avès to hear the landward breeze,
A-swing with good tobacco in a net between the trees,
With a negro lass to fan you while you listened to the roar
Of the breakers on the reef outside, that never touched the shore.

But Scripture saith, an ending to all fine things must be;
So the King's ships sailed on Avès and quite put down were we.
All day we fought like bulldogs, but they burst the booms at night;
And I fled in a piragua, sore wounded, from the fight.

Nine days I floated starving, and a negro lass beside,
Till for all I tried to cheer her, the poor young thing she died;
But as I lay a-gasping, a Bristol sail came by,
And brought me home to England here, to beg until I die.

And now I'm old and going — I'm sure I can't tell where;
One comfort is, this world's so hard, I can't be worse off there.

---

5. **hirpling by the linn**, crawling by the pool. 8. **tigged**, pulled, tore. 10. **Pegasus**, a fabled winged horse whose hoof caused the fountain of the Muses to spring forth from Mt. Helicon, in Greece. He is associated with poetic inspiration. **nicher**, neigh.

*The Last Buccaneer*. Cf. Macaulay's *The Last Buccaneer*, page 2.

4. **Isle of Avès**, the Bird Islands, in the Venezuelan group of the West Indies. **Spanish main**, the southern portion of the Caribbean Sea. The phrase was applied also to the mainland of Spanish America from Panama to the Amazon River.

12. **keel-haul**, haul by ropes under the keel of a ship. This was a method of torture used by pirates. It was also a method of punishment once used in the Dutch and English navies. 14. **colibris**, humming-birds. 21. **ending . . . be.** Cf. *1 Peter*, 4:7.—"But the end of all things is at hand." 24. **piragua**, a two-masted, flat-bottomed boat.

If I might but be a sea-dove, I'd fly across the main,
To the pleasant Isle of Avès, to look at it once again. (1856)

## From *THE WATER-BABIES*

### The Tide River

Clear and cool, clear and cool,
By laughing shallow, and dreaming pool;
Cool and clear, cool and clear,
By shining shingle, and foaming weir;
Under the crag where the ouzel sings,
And the ivied wall where the church-bell rings,
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.

Dank and foul, dank and foul,
By the smoky town in its murky cowl;
Foul and dank, foul and dank,
By wharf and sewer and slimy bank;
Darker and darker the further I go,
Baser and baser the richer I grow;
Who dare sport with the sin-defiled?
Shrink from me, turn from me, mother and child.

Strong and free, strong and free,
The floodgates are open, away to the sea;
Free and strong, free and strong,
Cleansing my streams as I hurry along
To the golden sands and the leaping bar,
And the taintless tide that awaits me afar,
As I lose myself in the infinite main,
Like a soul that has sinned and is pardoned again.
Undefiled, for the undefiled;
Play by me, bathe in me, mother and child.
(*1862;* 1862)

### Young and Old

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green;
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen;
Then hey for boot and horse, lad,
And round the world away;
Young blood must have its course, lad,
And every dog his day.

When all the world is old, lad,
And all the trees are brown;
And all the sport is stale, lad,
And all the wheels run down;
Creep home, and take your place there,
The spent and maimed among.
God grant you find one face there
You loved when all was young.
(*1862;* 1862)

## LORRAINE, LORRAINE, LORRÈE

"Are you ready for your Steeple-chase, Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrèe?
Barum, Barum, Barum, Barum, Barum, Barum, Baree.
You're booked to ride your capping race today at Coulterlee,
You're booked to ride Vindictive, for all the world to see,
To keep him straight, and keep him first, and win the run for me.
Barum, Barum," etc.

She clasped her new-born baby, poor Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrèe.
"I cannot ride Vindictive, as any man might see,
And I will not ride Vindictive, with this baby on my knee;
He's killed a boy, he's killed a man, and why must he kill me?"

"Unless you ride Vindictive, Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrèe,
Unless you ride Vindictive today at Coulterlee,
And land him safe across the brook, and win the blank for me,
It's you may keep your baby, for you'll get no keep from me."

"That husbands could be cruel," said Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrèe,
"That husbands could be cruel, I have known for seasons three;
But oh! to ride Vindictive while a baby cries for me,
And be killed across a fence at last for all the world to see!"

She mastered young Vindictive — oh! the gallant lass was she!
And kept him straight and won the race as near as near could be;
But he killed her at the brook against a pollard willow tree;
Oh! he killed her at the brook, the brute, for all the world to see,
And no one but the baby cried for poor Lorraine, Lorrèe. (*1874;* 1874)

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4. **shingle, weir,** gravel, dam. 5. **ouzel,** the water ouzel.

*Lorraine, Lorraine, Lorrèe.* 3. **capping,** chief, best. 21. **pollard,** a tree cut back to the trunk.

# ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH
(1819-1861)

## IN A LECTURE-ROOM

Away, haunt thou not me,
Thou vain Philosophy!
Little hast thou bestead,
Save to perplex the head,
And leave the spirit dead.
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go,
While from the secret treasure-depths below,
Fed by the skyey shower,
And clouds that sink and rest on hilltops high,
Wisdom at once, and Power,
Are welling, bubbling forth, unseen, incessantly?
Why labor at the dull mechanic oar,
When the fresh breeze is blowing,
And the strong current flowing,
Right onward to the Eternal Shore?
(*1840;* 1849)

## Τὸ καλόν

I have seen higher, holier things than these,
And therefore must to these refuse my heart,
Yet am I panting for a little ease;
I'll take, and so depart.

Ah, hold! the heart is prone to fall away,
Her high and cherished visions to forget,
And if thou takest, how wilt thou repay
So vast, so dread a debt?

How will the heart, which now thou trustest, then
Corrupt, yet in corruption mindful yet,
Turn with sharp stings upon itself! Again,
Bethink thee of the debt!

— Hast thou seen higher, holier things than these,
And therefore must to these thy heart refuse?
With the true best, alack, how ill agrees
That best that thou would'st choose!

The Summum Pulchrum rests in heaven above;
Do thou, as best thou may'st, thy duty do.
Amid the things allowed thee, live and love;
Some day thou shalt it view. (*1841;* 1849)

## QUA CURSUM VENTUS

As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay
With canvas drooping, side by side,
Two towers of sail at dawn of day
And scarce long leagues apart descried;

When fell the night, upsprung the breeze,
And all the darkling hours they plied,
Nor dreamt but each the self-same seas
By each was cleaving, side by side:

E'en so, but why the tale reveal
Of those, whom year by year unchanged,
Brief absence joined anew to feel,
Astounded, soul from soul estranged?

At dead of night their sails were filled,
And onward each rejoicing steered —
Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,
Or wist, what first with dawn appeared!

To veer, how vain! On, onward strain,
Brave barks! In light, in darkness too,
Through winds and tides one compass guides—
To that, and your own selves, be true.

But O blithe breeze; and O great seas,
Though ne'er, that earliest parting past,
On your wide plain they join again,
Together lead them home at last.

One port, methought, alike they sought,
One purpose hold where'er they fare —
O bounding breeze, O rushing seas!
At last, at last, unite them there! (1849)

## "WEN GOTT BETRÜGT, IST WOHL BETROGEN"

Is it true, ye gods, who treat us
As the gambling fool is treated;
O ye, who ever cheat us,
And let us feel we're cheated!
Is it true that poetical power,
The gift of heaven, the dower
Of Apollo and the Nine,

---

*In a Lecture-Room.* The first three lines of this poem are an echo of the opening lines of Milton's *Il Penseroso*—

> "Hence, vain deluding Joys,
> The brood of Folly without father bred!
> How little you bestéd,
> Or fill the fixéd mind with all your toys."

*Τὸ καλόν.* The title means *Moral Virtue.*
17. **Summum Pulchrum,** the highest beauty.

*Qua Cursum Ventus.* The title means *As the Wind Blows, So the Vessel Takes Its Course.* The words are taken from Virgil's *Æneid,* 3, 269. The poem suggests the break between Clough and W. G. Ward (1812-82), a religious thinker who became a Roman Catholic in 1845.

*"Wen Gott Betrügt, Ist Wohl Betrogen."* The title means *He Whom God Deludes Is Well Deluded.* This is an old German proverb found in a collection published by Johannes Agricola (1529-48). See *Dipsychus,* 94-97, page 408.

7. **Apollo and the Nine.** Apollo was the god of poetry and music. For the Nine Muses see note on *In the Depths* 2, page 404.

The inborn sense, "the vision and the faculty divine,"
All we glorify and bless
In our rapturous exaltation,
All invention, and creation,
Exuberance of fancy, and sublime imagination,
All a poet's fame is built on,
The fame of Shakespeare, Milton,
Of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley,
Is in reason's grave precision,
Nothing more, nothing less,
Than a peculiar conformation,
Constitution, and condition
Of the brain and of the belly?
Is it true, ye gods who cheat us?
And that's the way ye treat us?

Oh, say it, all who think it,
Look straight, and never blink it!
If it is so, let it be so,
And we will all agree so;
But the plot has counterplot,
It may be, and yet be not. (1849)

## THE NEW SINAI

Lo, here is God, and there is God!
Believe it not, O Man;
In such vain sort to this and that
The ancient heathen ran:
Though Old Religion shake her head,
And say in bitter grief,
The day behold, at first foretold,
Of atheist unbelief:
Take better part, with manly heart,
Thine adult spirit can;
Receive it not, believe it not,
Believe it not, O Man!

As men at dead of night awaked
With cries, "The king is here,"
Rush forth and greet whome'er they meet,
Whoe'er shall first appear;
And still repeat, to all the street,
" 'Tis he — the king is here";
The long procession moveth on,
Each nobler form they see,
With changeful suit they still salute
And cry, " 'Tis he, 'tis he!"

So, even so, when men were young,
And earth and heaven were new,
And His immediate presence He
From human hearts withdrew,
The soul perplexed and daily vexed
With sensuous False and True,
Amazed, bereaved, no less believed,
And fain would see Him too.
"He is!" the prophet-tongues proclaimed;
In joy and hasty fear,
"He is!" aloud replied the crowd,
"Is here, and here, and here."

"He is! They are!" in distance seen
On yon Olympus high,
In those Avernian woods abide
And walk this azure sky;
"They are! They are!" — to every show
Its eyes the baby turned,
And blazes sacrificial, tall,
On thousand altars burned;
"They are! They are!" — On Sinai's top
Far seen the lightnings shone,
The thunder broke, a trumpet spoke,
And God said, "I am One."

God spake it out, "I, God, am One";
The unheeding ages ran.
And baby-thoughts again, again,
Have dogged the growing man;
And as of old from Sinai's top
God said that God is One,
By Science strict so speaks He now
To tell us, There is None!
Earth goes by chemic forces; Heaven's
A Mécanique Céleste!
And heart and mind of human kind
A watch-work as the rest!

Is this a Voice, as was the Voice,
Whose speaking told abroad,
When thunder pealed, and mountain reeled,
The ancient truth of God?
Ah, not the Voice; 'tis but the cloud,
The outer-darkness dense,
Where image none, nor e'er was seen
Similitude of sense.
'Tis but the cloudy darkness dense
That wrapped the Mount around;
While in amaze the people stays,
To hear the Coming Sound.

Is there no prophet-soul the while
To dare, sublimely meek,
Within the shroud of blackest cloud
The Deity to seek?

---

8. **the vision . . . divine.** From Wordsworth's *Excursion*, 1, 79.

*The New Sinai.* Sinai was the mountain upon which God appeared to Moses and gave him the Ten Commandments. See *Exodus*, 19, 20, and 34. Clough's poem bears upon the conflict that raged in his day between science and religion.

36. **Olympus**, Mt. Olympus, in Greece, the fabled home of the Greek gods. 37. **Avernian woods**, on the shore of Lake Avernus, nine miles west of Naples, Italy. The lake is supposed to fill the crater of an extinct volcano regarded as the entrance to the infernal regions. 43-46. **On Sinai's top**, etc. From *Exodus*, 19:16.—"There were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people . . . trembled." 56. **Mécanique Céleste**, a celestial mechanism.

'Midst atheistic systems dark,
And darker hearts' despair,
That soul has heard perchance His word,
And on the dusky air
His skirts, as passed He by, to see
Hath strained on their behalf,
Who on the plain, with dance amain,
Adore the Golden Calf.

'Tis but the cloudy darkness dense;
Though blank the tale it tells,
No God, no Truth! yet He, in sooth,
Is there — within it dwells;
Within the skeptic darkness deep
He dwells that none may see,
Till idol forms and idle thoughts
Have passed and ceased to be.
No God, no Truth! ah, though, in sooth
So stand the doctrine's half;
On Egypt's track return not back,
Nor own the Golden Calf.

Take better part, with manlier heart,
Thine adult spirit can;
No God, no Truth, receive it ne'er —
Believe it ne'er — O Man!
But turn not then to seek again
What first the ill began;
No God, it saith; ah, wait in faith
God's self-completing plan;
Receive it not, leave it not,
And wait it out, O Man!

"The Man that went the cloud within
Is gone and vanished quite;
He cometh not," the people cries,
"Nor bringeth God to sight.
Lo, these thy gods, that safety give,
Adore and keep the feast!"
Deluding and deluded, cries
The Prophet's brother-Priest;
And Israel all bows down to fall
Before the gilded beast.

Devout, indeed! that priestly creed,
O Man, reject as sin;
The clouded hill attend thou still,
And him that went within.
He yet shall bring some worthy thing
For waiting souls to see;
Some sacred word that he hath heard
Their light and life shall be;
Some lofty part, than which the heart
Adopt no nobler can,
Thou shalt receive, thou shalt believe
And thou shalt do, O Man! (*1845*; 1862)

## THE QUESTIONING SPIRIT

The human spirits saw I on a day,
Sitting and looking each a different way;
And hardly tasking, subtly questioning,
Another spirit went around the ring
To each and each. And as he ceased his say,
Each after each, I heard them singly sing,
Some querulously high, some softly, sadly low,
We know not — what avails to know?
We know not — wherefore need we know?
This answer gave they still unto his suing,
We know not, let us do as we are doing.
Dost thou not know that these things only seem? —
I know not, let me dream my dream.
Are dust and ashes fit to make a treasure? —

I know not, let me take my pleasure.
What shall avail the knowledge thou hast sought? —
I know not, let me think my thought.
What is the end of strife? —
I know not, let me live my life.
How many days or e'er thou mean'st to move? —
I know not, let me love my love.
Were not things old once new? —
I know not, let me do as others do.
And when the rest were over past,
I know not, I will do my duty, said the last.

Thy duty do? rejoined the voice,
Ah, do it, do it, and rejoice;
But shalt thou then, when all is done,
Enjoy a love, embrace a beauty
Like these, that may be seen and won
In life, whose course will then be run;
Or wilt thou be where there is none?
I know not, I will do my duty.

And taking up the word around, above, below,
Some querulously high, some softly, sadly low,
We know not, sang they all, nor ever need we know.
We know not, sang they, what avails to know?
Whereat the questioning spirit, some short space,
Though unabashed, stood quiet in his place.
But as the echoing chorus died away
And to their dreams the rest returned apace,
By the one spirit I saw him kneeling low,
And in a silvery whisper heard him say:
Truly, thou know'st not, and thou need'st not know;
Hope only, hope thou, and believe alway;
I also know not, and I need not know,
Only with questionings pass I to and fro,
Perplexing these that sleep, and in their folly
Imbreeding doubt and skeptic melancholy;

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82. **Golden Calf**, an image made by Aaron and worshiped by the Israelites (*Exodus*, 32:1-4). 105. **Man**, Moses. 112. **brother-Priest**, Aaron.

Till that, their dreams deserting, they with me
Come all to this true ignorance and thee.
(*1847;* 1862)

## BETHESDA

### A SEQUEL

I saw again the spirits on a day,
Where on the earth in mournful case they lay;
Five porches were there, and a pool, and round,
Huddling in blankets, strewn upon the ground,
Tied-up and bandaged, weary, sore, and spent,
The maimed and halt, diseased and impotent.

For a great angel came, 'twas said, and stirred
The pool at certain seasons, and the word
Was, with this people of the sick, that they
Who in the waters here their limbs should lay
Before the motion on the surface ceased
Should of their torment straightway be released.
So with shrunk bodies and with heads down-dropped,
Stretched on the steps, and at the pillars propped,
Watching by day and listening through the night,
They filled the place, a miserable sight.

And I beheld that on the stony floor
He too, that spoke of duty once before,
No otherwise than others here today,
Foredone and sick and sadly muttering lay.
"I know not, I will do — what is it I would say;
What was that word which once sufficed alone for all,
Which now I seek in vain, and never can recall?"
And then, as weary of in vain renewing
His question, thus his mournful thought pursuing,
"I know not, I must do as other men are doing."

But what the waters of that pool might be,
Of Lethe were they, or Philosophy;
And whether he, long waiting, did attain
Deliverance from the burden of his pain
There with the rest; or whether, yet before,
Some more diviner stranger passed the door
With his small company into that sad place,
And breathing hope into the sick man's face,
Bade him take up his bed, and rise and go,
What the end were, and whether it were so,
Further than this I saw not, neither know.
(*1849;* 1862)

## PESCHIERA

What voice did on my spirit fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost?
"'Tis better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all."

The tricolor — a trampled rag —
Lies, dirt and dust; the lines I track
By sentry boxes yellow-black,
Lead up to no Italian flag.

I see the Croat soldier stand
Upon the grass of your redoubts;
The eagle with his black wings flouts
The breadth and beauty of your land.

Yet not in vain, although in vain,
O men of Brescia, on the day
Of loss past hope, I heard you say
Your welcome to the noble pain.

You say, "Since so it is — good-by,
Sweet life, high hope; but whatsoe'er
May be, or must, no tongue shall dare
To tell, 'The Lombard feared to die!'"

You said (there shall be answer fit),
"And if our children must obey,
They must; but thinking on this day
'Twill less debase them to submit."

You said (oh, not in vain you said),
"Haste, brothers, haste, while yet we may;
The hours ebb fast of this one day
When blood may yet be nobly shed."

Ah! not for idle hatred, not
For honor, fame, nor self-applause,
But for the glory of the cause,
You did what will not be forgot.

---

*Bethesda.* Bethesda is the name of a pool near Jerusalem, said to have curative powers. (See *John*, 5:1-9.) This poem is a sequel to *The Questioning Spirit.*

28. **Lethe**, the river of forgetfulness, in Hades.

35. **take up . . . go**, the command of Jesus to the sick man by the pool (*John*, 5:5-9).

*Peschiera.* Peschiera is a fortified town in the province of Verona, Italy. The poem refers to a defeat of the Italians in their struggle for freedom from Austria.

3-4. **'Tis better, etc.** Cf. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, 27, lines 15-16, page 64. 5. **The tricolor**, the flag of Italy—red, white, and green. 9. **Croat**, a native of Croatia, a part of Jugo-Slavia. Croatia was formerly a province of Hungary. 11. **eagle**, on the standard of the Croats. 14. **Brescia**, an ancient city in Italy, at the foot of the Alps. 20. **Lombard**, a native of Lombardy, in northern Italy.

And though the stranger stand, 'tis true,
By force and fortune's right he stands;
By fortune, which is in God's hands,
And strength, which yet shall spring in you.

This voice did on my spirit fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost,
" 'Tis better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all."
(*1849;* 1862)

## ALTERAM PARTEM

Or shall I say, Vain word, false thought,
Since Prudence hath her martyrs too,
And Wisdom dictates not to do,
Till doing shall be not for naught?

Not ours to give or lose is life;
Will Nature, when her brave ones fall,
Remake her work? or songs recall
Death's victim slain in useless strife?

That rivers flow into the sea
Is loss and waste, the foolish say,
Nor know that back they find their way,
Unseen, to where they wont to be.

Showers fall upon the hills, springs flow,
The river runneth still at hand,
Brave men are born into the land,
And whence the foolish do not know.

No! no vain voice did on me fall,
Peschiera, when thy bridge I crost,
" '*Tis* better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all."
(*1849;* 1862)

## IN THE DEPTHS

It is not sweet content, be sure,
That moves the nobler Muse to song,
Yet when could truth come whole and pure
From hearts that inly writhe with wrong?

'Tis not the calm and peaceful breast
That sees or reads the problem true;
They only know, on whom 't has prest
Too hard to hope to solve it too.

Our ills are worse than at their ease
These blameless happy souls suspect;
They only study the disease,
Alas, who live not to detect.
(*1849;* 1862)

## EASTER DAY

### NAPLES, 1849

Through the great sinful streets of Naples as I passed,
With fiercer heat than flamed above my head
My heart was hot within me; till at last
My brain was lightened when my tongue had said —
Christ is not risen!
Christ is not risen, no —
He lies and molders low;
Christ is not risen!

What though the stone were rolled away, and though
The grave found empty there? —
If not there, then elsewhere;
If not where Joseph laid Him first, why then
Where other men
Translaid Him after, in some humbler clay.
Long ere today
Corruption that sad perfect work hath done,
Which here she scarcely, lightly had begun;
The foul engendered worm
Feeds on the flesh of the life-giving form
Of our most Holy and Anointed One.
He is not risen, no —
He lies and molders low;
Christ is not risen!

What if the women, ere the dawn was gray,
Saw one or more great angels, as they say
(Angels, or Him himself)? Yet neither there, nor then,
Nor afterwards, nor elsewhere, nor at all,
Hath He appeared to Peter or the Ten;
Nor save in thunderous terror, to blind Saul;
Save in an after Gospel and late Creed,
He is not risen, indeed —
Christ is not risen!

---

*Alteram Partem.* The title means *On the Other Side.* 18. **Peschiera.** See note on previous poem.

*In the Depths.* 2. **nobler Muse,** Melpomene, the muse of tragedy. The other muses, daughters of Jove, were Calliope, epic poetry; Clio, history; Euterpe, lyric poetry; Terpsichore, choral dance and song; Erato, love poetry; Polyhymnia, sacred poetry; Urania, astronomy; and Thalia, comedy.

*Easter Day.* Clough was in Naples on Easter Day, 1849. 12. **where . . . laid Him first,** in Joseph's tomb (*Matthew,* 27:57-60). 24-25. **women . . . angels.** See *Matthew,* 28; *Mark,* 16:5; *Luke,* 24:4; *John,* 20:22. 28. **Peter . . . Ten.** After the Resurrection, as reported in *John* 21, Christ appeared to Peter and the other disciples on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. (See *Luke,* 24:34-43; *John,* 20:19-25.) 29. **Saul.** While Saul was on the road to Damascus, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'" (*Acts,* 9:3-4). 30. **late Creed.** The Resurrection of Christ was affirmed in the creed adopted by a church council held at Nicæa, an ancient city of Asia Minor, in 325 A.D. It is also a part of the so-called Apostles' Creed, of unknown origin, dating possibly from the second century.

Or, what if e'en, as runs a tale, the Ten
Saw, heard, and touched, again and yet again?
What if at Emmaüs' inn, and by Capernaum's Lake,
Came One, the bread that brake —
Came One that spake as never mortal spake,
And with them ate, and drank, and stood, and walked about?
Ah? "some" did well to "doubt"!
Ah! the true Christ, while these things came to pass,
Nor heard, nor spake, nor walked, nor lived alas!
He was not risen, no —
He lay and moldered low,
Christ was not risen!

As circulates in some great city crowd
A rumor, changeful, vague, importunate, and loud,
From no determined center or of fact
Or authorship exact,
Which no man can deny
Nor verify;
So spread the wondrous fame;
He all the same
Lay senseless, moldering, low:
He was not risen, no —
Christ was not risen!

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
As of the unjust, also of the just —
Yea, of that Just One, too!
This is the one sad Gospel that is true —
Christ is not risen!

Is He not risen, and shall we not rise?
Oh, we unwise!
What did we dream, what wake we to discover?
Ye hills, fall on us, and ye mountains, cover!
In darkness and great gloom
Come ere we thought it is *our* day of doom;
From the cursed world, which is one tomb,
Christ is not risen!

Carpe diem
Epicurean

Eat, drink, and play, and think that this is bliss:
There is no heaven but this;
There is no hell,
Save earth, which serves the purpose doubly well,
Seeing it visits still
With equalest apportionment of ill
Both good and bad alike, and brings to one same dust
The unjust and the just
With Christ, who is not risen.

Eat, drink, and die, for we are souls bereaved;
Of all the creatures under heaven's wide cope
We are most hopeless, who had once most hope,
And most beliefless, that had most believed.
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
As of the unjust, also of the just —
Yea, of that Just One too!
It is the one sad Gospel that is true —
Christ is not risen!

Weep not beside the tomb,
Ye women, unto whom
He was great solace while ye tendered him;
Ye who with napkin o'er the head
And folds of linen round each wounded limb
Laid out the Sacred Dead;
And thou that bar'st Him in thy wondering womb;
Yea, Daughters of Jerusalem, depart,
Bind up as best ye may your own sad bleeding heart.

Go to your homes, your living children tend,
Your earthly spouses love;
Set your affections *not* on things above,
Which moth and rust corrupt, which quickliest come to end;
Or pray, if pray ye must, and pray, if pray ye can,
For death; since dead is He whom ye deemed more than man,
Who is not risen: no —
But lies and molders low —
Who is not risen!

Ye men of Galilee!
Why stand ye looking up to heaven, where Him ye ne'er may see,
Neither ascending hence, nor returning hither again?
Ye ignorant and idle fishermen!
Hence to your huts, and boats, and inland native shore,
And catch not men, but fish;
Whate'er things ye might wish,
Him neither here nor there ye e'er shall meet with more.

---

33-34. **Ten saw,** etc., as in the account recorded in *Luke*, 24:36-48. 35. **Emmaüs,** a village near Jerusalem. After the Resurrection Christ appeared to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaüs, walked with them to the village, and tarried with them during part of the night (*Luke*, 24:13-31; *John*, 21:1-24). **Capernaum's Lake,** the Sea of Galilee, bordering the city of Capernaum. 39. **"some" . . . "doubt."** "And when they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted" (*Matthew*, 28:17). 56. **Ashes . . . dust,** words of the burial service.

98-99. **Set . . . corrupt.** From *Matthew*, 6:20.—"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt." 110. **catch not men.** Jesus found Simon and Andrew casting a net into the sea, "for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, 'Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men'" (*Mark*, 1:16-17).

Ye poor deluded youths, go home,
Mend the old nets ye left to roam,
Tie the split oar, patch the torn sail;
It was indeed an "idle tale" —
He was not risen!
And, oh, good men of ages yet to be,
Who shall believe *because* ye did not see —
Oh, be ye warned, be wise!
Nor more with pleading eyes,
And sobs of strong desire,
Unto the empty vacant void aspire,
Seeking another and impossible birth
That is not of your own, and only mother earth.
But if there is no other life for you,
Sit down and be content, since this must even do;
He is not risen!
One look, and then depart,
Ye humble and ye holy men of heart;
And ye! ye ministers and stewards of a Word
Which ye would preach, because another heard —
Ye worshipers of that ye do not know,
Take these things hence and go —
He is not risen!

Here, on our Easter Day
We rise, we come, and lo! we find Him not,
Gardener nor other, on the sacred spot.
Where they have laid Him there is none to say;
No sound, nor in, nor out — no word
Of where to seek the dead or meet the living Lord.
There is no glistering of an angel's wings,
There is no voice of heavenly clear behest.
Let us go hence, and think upon these things
In silence, which is best.
Is He not risen? No —
But lies and molders low?
Christ is not risen? (*1849;* 1869)

## EASTER DAY

### II

So in the sinful streets, abstracted and alone,
I with my secret self held communing of mine own.
So in the southern city spake the tongue
Of one that somewhat overwildly sung,
But in a later hour I sat and heard
Another voice that spake — another graver word.
Weep not, it bade, whatever hath been said,
Though He be dead, He is not dead.
In the true creed
He is yet risen indeed;
Christ is yet risen.

Weep not beside His Tomb,
Ye women unto whom
He was great comfort and yet greater grief;
Nor ye, ye faithful few that wont with Him to roam,
Seek sadly what for Him ye left, go hopeless to your home;
Nor ye despair, ye sharers yet to be of their belief;
Though He be dead, He is not dead,
Nor gone, though fled,
Not lost, though vanished;
Though He return not, though
He lies and molders low;
In the true creed
He is yet risen indeed;
Christ is yet risen.

Sit if ye will, sit down upon the ground,
Yet not to weep and wail, but calmly look around.
Whate'er befell,
Earth is not hell;
Now, too, as when it first began,
Life is yet life, and man is man.
For all that breathe beneath the heaven's high cope,
Joy with grief mixes, with despondence hope.
Hope conquers cowardice, joy grief;
Or at least, faith unbelief.
Though dead, not dead;
Not gone, though fled;
Not lost, though vanished.
In the great gospel and true creed,
He is yet risen indeed;
Christ is yet risen.
(*1849;* 1869)

## From *DIPSYCHUS*

### From PART I, SCENE II

"There is no God," the wicked saith,
"And truly it's a blessing,
For what He might have done with us
It's better only guessing."

"There is no God," a youngster thinks,
"Or really, if there may be,
He surely did not mean a man
Always to be a baby."

"There is no God, or if there is,"
The tradesman thinks, " 'twere funny

---

*Dipsychus.* This poem consists of a series of conversations between Dipsychus and a Mephistophelian Spirit. They go together about Venice, apparently to see the sights, and whenever they come to a well-known place they stop and converse. See Critical Notes.

1. **"There is no God."** See note on line 1, *The Cry of the Human*, page 359. This poem is spoken by the Spirit to Dipsychus, who had been troubled all night by a dream in which a bell kept tolling out the words, "There is no God!"

If He should take it ill in me
To make a little money."

"Whether there be," the rich man says,
"It matters very little,
For I and mine, thank somebody,
Are not in want of victual."

Some others, also, to themselves,
Who scarce so much as doubt it,
Think there is none, when they are well
And do not think about it.

But country folks who live beneath
The shadow of the steeple;
The parson and the parson's wife,
And mostly married people;

Youths green and happy in first love,
So thankful for illusion;
And men caught out in what the world
Calls guilt, in first confusion;

And almost everyone when age,
Disease, or sorrows strike him,
Inclines to think there is a God,
Or something very like Him. (*1849;* 1862)

### From PART II

#### SCENE II. — *In a Gondola*

*Sp. Per ora.* To the Grand Canal.
Afterwards e'en as fancy shall.

*Di.* Afloat; we move. Delicious! Ah,
What else is like the gondola?
This level floor of liquid glass
Begins beneath us swift to pass.
It goes as though it went alone
By some impulsion of its own.
(How light it moves, how softly! Ah,
Were all things like the gondola!)

How light it moves, how softly! Ah,
Could life, as does our gondola,
Unvexed with quarrels, aims, and cares,
And moral duties and affairs,
Unswaying, noiseless, swift and strong,
Forever thus — thus glide along!
(How light we move, how softly! Ah,
Were life but as the gondola!)

With no more motion than should bear
A freshness to the languid air;
With no more effort than exprest
The need and naturalness of rest,
Which we beneath a grateful shade
Should take on peaceful pillows laid!
(How light we move, how softly! Ah,
Were life but as the gondola!)

In one unbroken passage borne
To closing night from opening morn,
Uplift at whiles slow eyes to mark
Some palace front, some passing bark;
Through windows catch the varying shore,
And hear the soft turns of the oar!
(How light we move, how softly! Ah,
Were life but as the gondola!)

So live, nor need to call to mind
Our slaving brother here behind!

*Sp.* Pooh! Nature meant him for no better
Than our most humble menial debtor:
Who thanks us for his day's employment
As we our purse for our enjoyment.

*Di.* To make one's fellow-man an instrument —

*Sp.* Is just the thing that makes him most content.

*Di.* Our gayeties, our luxuries,
Our pleasures and our glee,
Mere insolence and wantonness,
Alas! they feel to me.

Life—it is beautiful truly, my brothers, I grant it you duly;
But for perfection attaining is one method only, abstaining;
Let us abstain, for we should so, if only we thought that we could so.

*Sp.* Bravo, bravissimo! this time though
You rather were run short for rime though;
Not that on that account your verse
Could be much better or much worse.

This world is very odd, we see;
We do not comprehend it;
But in one fact we all agree —
God won't, and we can't, mend it.

Being common-sense, it can't be sin
To take it as I find it;
The pleasure to take pleasure in;
The pain, try not to mind it.

*Di.* O let me love my love unto myself alone,
And know my knowledge to the world unknown;
No witness to the vision call,

---

*Part II, Scene II: In a Gondola.* 1. **Per ora**, now, for the time being.

Beholding, unbeheld of all;
And worship thee, with thee withdrawn, apart,
Whoe'er, whate'er thou art,
Within the closest veil of mine own inmost heart.

Better it were, thou sayest, to consent,
Feast while we may, and live ere life be spent;
Close up clear eyes, and call the unstable sure,
The unlovely lovely, and the filthy pure;
In self-belyings, self-deceivings roll,
And lose in Action, Passion, Talk, the soul.

Nay, better far to mark off thus much air,
And call it heaven; place bliss and glory there;
Fix perfect homes in the unsubstantial sky,
And say, what is not, will be by-and-by;
What here exists not must exist elsewhere.
But play no tricks upon thy soul, O man;
Let fact be fact, and life the thing it can.

*Sp.* To these remarks so sage and clerkly,
Worthy of Malebranche or Berkeley,
I trust it won't be deemed a sin
If I too answer "with a grin."

These juicy meats, this flashing wine,
May be an unreal mere appearance;
Only — for my inside, in fine,
They have a singular coherence.

Oh, yes, my pensive youth, abstain;
And any empty sick sensation,
Remember, anything like pain
Is only your imagination.

Trust me, I've read your German sage
To far more purpose e'er than you did;
You find it in his wisest page,
Whom God deludes is well deluded.

*Di.* Where are the great, whom thou would'st wish to praise thee?
Where are the pure, whom thou would'st choose to love thee?
Where are the brave, to stand supreme above thee,
Whose high commands would cheer, whose chiding raise thee?
Seek, seeker, in thyself; submit to find
In the stones, bread, and life in the blank mind.

(Written in London, standing in the Park,
One evening in July, just before dark.)

*Sp.* As I sat at the café, I said to myself,
They may talk as they please about what they call pelf,
They may sneer as they like about eating and drinking,
But help it I cannot, I cannot help thinking,
How pleasant it is to have money, heigh-ho!
How pleasant it is to have money.

I sit at my table *en grand seigneur*,
And when I have done, throw a crust to the poor;
Not only the pleasure, one's self, of good living,
But also the pleasure of now and then giving.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

It was but last winter I came up to town,
But already I'm getting a little renown;
I make new acquaintance where'er I appear;
I am not too shy, and have nothing to fear.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

I drive through the streets, and I care not a d——n;
The people they stare, and they ask who I am;
And if I should chance to run over a cad,
I can pay for the damage if ever so bad.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

We stroll to our box and look down on the pit,
And if it weren't low should be tempted to spit;
We loll and we talk until people look up,
And when it's half over we go out to sup.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

The best of the tables and the best of the fare —
And as for the others, the devil may care;
It isn't our fault if they dare not afford
To sup like a prince and be drunk as a lord.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

We sit at our tables and tipple champagne;
Ere one bottle goes, comes another again;
The waiters they skip and they scuttle about,
And the landlord attends us so civilly out.

---

82. **clerkly**, wise, learned. 83. **Malebranche**, a famous French philosopher (1638-1715). **Berkeley**, George Berkeley (1685-1753), a noted English philosopher, political economist, and bishop. The next stanza is a refutation of Berkeley's idealism. 97. **Whom . . . deluded.** Cf. "*Wen Gott Betrügt*," page 400.

112. **en grand seigneur**, as a noble lord.

So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

It was but last winter I came up to town,
But already I'm getting a little renown;
I get to good houses without much ado,
Am beginning to see the nobility too.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

O dear! what a pity they ever should lose it!
For they are the gentry that know how to use it;
So grand and so graceful, such manners, such dinners,
But yet, after all, it is we are the winners.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

Thus I sat at my table *en grand seigneur*,
And when I had done threw a crust to the poor;
Not only the pleasure, one's self, of good eating,
But also the pleasure of now and then treating.
So pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
So pleasant it is to have money.

They may talk as they please about what they call pelf,
And how one ought never to think of one's self,
And how pleasures of thought surpass eating and drinking —
My pleasure of thought is the pleasure of thinking
How pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
How pleasant it is to have money.

(Written in Venice, but for all parts true,
'Twas not a crust I gave him, but a sou.)

A gondola here, and a gondola there,
'Tis the pleasantest fashion of taking the air.
To right and to left; stop, turn, and go yonder,
And let us repeat, o'er the tide as we wander,
How pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
How pleasant it is to have money.

Come, leave your Gothic, worn-out story,
San Giorgio and the Redentore;
I from no building, gay or solemn,
Can spare the shapely Grecian column.
'Tis not, these centuries four, for naught
Our European world of thought
Hath made familiar to its home
The classic mind of Greece and Rome;
In all new work that would look forth
To more than antiquarian worth,
Palladio's pediments and bases,
Or something such, will find their places:
Maturer optics don't delight
In childish dim religious light,
In evanescent vague effects
That shirk, not face, one's intellects;
They love not fancies just betrayed,
And artful tricks of light and shade,
But pure form nakedly displayed,
And all things absolutely made.
The Doge's palace though, from hence,
In spite of doctrinaire pretense,
The tide now level with the quay,
Is certainly a thing to see.
We'll turn to the Rialto soon;
One's told to see it by the moon.

A gondola here, and a gondola there,
'Tis the pleasantest fashion of taking the air.
To right and to left; stop, turn, and go yonder,
And let us reflect, o'er the flood as we wander,
How pleasant it is to have money, heigh ho!
How pleasant it is to have money.

*Di.* How light we go, how soft we skim,
And all in moonlight seem to swim!
The south side rises o'er our bark,
A wall impenetrably dark;
The north is seen profusely bright;
The water, is it shade or light?
Say, gentle moon, which conquers now
The flood, those massy hulls, or thou?
(How light we go, how softly! Ah,
Were life but as the gondola!)

How light we go, how soft we skim,
And all in moonlight seem to swim!
In moonlight is it now, or shade?
In planes of sure division made,
By angles sharp of palace walls
The clear light and the shadow falls;
O sight of glory, sight of wonder!
Seen, a pictorial portent, under,
O great Rialto, the vast round
Of thy thrice-solid arch profound!

---

173. **sou,** a French coin worth about one cent. 180-181. **leave . . . Redentore.** The Spirit dislikes Gothic architecture and evidently some features of the two famous Renaissance churches in Venice—San Giorgio Maggiore and Redentore. These were both built by Andrea Palladio (line 190), an Italian architect of the 16th century for whom the classical Italian style is named.

184. **centuries four,** the period since the dawn of the Renaissance. 193. **dim . . . light.** From Milton's *Il Penseroso*, 160. 200. **Doge's palace,** the building in which the rulers of Venice formerly held their court. It is located on the Piazza of St. Mark. A magnificent example of Italian architecture, it is considered one of the most picturesque buildings in the world. 204. **Rialto,** a bridge over the Grand Canal in Venice.

(How light we go, how softly! Ah,
Life should be as the gondola!)

How light we go, how softly —

*Sp.* Nay;
'Fore heaven, enough of that today.
I'm deadly weary of your tune,
And half-ennuyé with the moon;
The shadows lie, the glories fall,
And are but moonshine, after all.
It goes against my conscience really
To let myself feel so ideally.
Come, for the Piazzetta steer;
'Tis nine o'clock or very near.
These airy blisses, skyey joys
Of vague romantic girls and boys,
Which melt the heart and the brain soften,
When not affected, as too often
They are, remind me, I protest,
Of nothing better at the best
Than Timon's feast to his ancient lovers,
Warm water under silver covers;
"Lap, dogs!" I think I hear him say;
And lap who will, so I'm away.

*Di.* How light we go, how soft we skim,
And all in moonlight seem to swim!
Against bright clouds projected dark,
The white dome now, reclined I mark,
And, by o'er-brilliant lamps displayed,
The Doge's columns and arcade;
Over still waters mildly come
The distant waters and the hum.
(How light we go, how softly! Ah,
Life should be as the gondola!)

How light we go, how soft we skim,
And all in open moonlight swim!
Ah, gondolier, slow, slow, more slow!
We go; but wherefore thus should go?
Ah, let not muscle all too strong
Beguile, betray thee to our wrong!
On to the landing, onward. Nay,
Sweet dream, a little longer stay!
On to the landing; here. And, ah!
Life is not as the gondola.

*Sp. Tre ore.* So. The Parthenone
Is it? you haunt for your limone.
Let me induce you to join me,
In gramolate persiche.

### Scene VII. — *At Torcello. Dipsychus alone*

*Di.* I had a vision; was it in my sleep?
And if it were, what then? But sleep or wake,
I saw a great light open o'er my head;
And sleep or wake, uplifted to that light,
Out of that light proceeding heard a voice
Uttering high words, which, whether sleep or wake,
In me were fixed, and in me must abide.

When the enemy is near thee,
Call on us!
In our hands we will upbear thee,
He shall neither scathe nor scare thee,
He shall fly thee, and shall fear thee.
Call on us!
Call when all good friends have left thee,
Of all good sights and sounds bereft thee;
Call when hope and heart are sinking,
And the brain is sick with thinking,
Help, O help!
Call, and following close behind thee
There shall haste, and there shall find thee,
Help, sure help.

When the panic comes upon thee,
When necessity seems on thee,
Hope and choice have all forgone thee,
Fate and force are closing o'er thee,
And but one way stands before thee —
Call on us!
Oh, and if thou dost not call,
Be but faithful, that is all.
Go right on, and close behind thee
There shall follow still and find thee,
Help, sure help. (*1849;* 1862)

## SAY NOT THE STRUGGLE NAUGHT AVAILETH

Say not the struggle naught availeth,
The labor and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

---

237. **half-ennuyé,** half-wearied. 242. **Piazzetta,** the small piazza leading from the Piazza of St. Mark's to the waterfront. It is flanked by the Doge's palace and the library of St. Mark's. 250 ff. **Timon's feast,** etc., a reference to the banquet scene in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens,* III, 6. Timon was a famous misanthrope who lived during the fifth century B.C. For a time he was rich and generous and was surrounded by numerous parasites. When his wealth failed, his friends deserted him, and he invited the parasites (lovers) to a pretended banquet. With the dishes containing only warm water before them, Timon shouted, "Uncover, dogs, and lap"; then he threw the water and dishes at the guests and drove them out. 274. **Tre ore,** three hours later. **Parthenone,** the name of a café. 275. **limone,** lemonade.

277. **gramolate persiche,** a kind of ice pudding.
*Scene VII.* **Torcello,** on the island of Burano, below Venice. In the sections omitted Dipsychus longs for action and bids farewell to the "sweet simplicities of life"; but he is admonished by the spirit to submit to the "stern necessity of things" as they are.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.
(*1849;* 1862)

## IN STRATIS VIARUM

Blessed are those who have not seen,
And who have yet believed
The witness, here that has not been,
From heaven they have received.

Blessed are those who have not known
The things that stand before them,
And for a vision of their own
Can piously ignore them.

So let me think whate'er befall,
That in the city duly
Some men there are who love at all,
Some women who love truly;

And that upon two millions odd
Transgressors in sad plenty,
Mercy will of a gracious God
Be shown — because of twenty. (1862)

## "WHAT WENT YE OUT FOR TO SEE?"

Across the sea, along the shore,
In numbers more and ever more,
From lonely hut and busy town,
The valley through, the mountain down,
What was it ye went out to see,
Ye silly folk of Galilee?
The reed that in the wind doth shake?
The weed that washes in the lake?
The reeds that waver, the weeds that float? —
A young man preaching in a boat.

What was it ye went out to hear
By sea and land, from far and near?
A teacher? Rather seek the feet
Of those who sit in Moses' seat.
Go humbly seek, and bow to them,
Far off in great Jerusalem.
From them that in her courts ye saw,
Her perfect doctors of the law,
What is it ye came here to note? —
A young man preaching in a boat.

A prophet! Boys and women weak!
Declare or cease to rave;
Whence is it he hath learned to speak?
Say, who his doctrine gave?
A prophet? Prophet wherefore he
Of all in Israel tribes? —
*He teacheth with authority,*
*And not as do the Scribes.* (*1851;* 1862)

## IN THE GREAT METROPOLIS

Each for himself is still the rule;
We learn it when we go to school —
The devil take the hindmost, O!

And when the schoolboys grow to men,
In life they learn it o'er again —
The devil take the hindmost, O!

For in the church, and at the bar,
On 'Change, at court, wher'er they are,
The devil takes the hindmost, O!

Husband for husband, wife for wife,
Are careful that in married life
The devil takes the hindmost, O!

From youth to age, whate'er the game,
The unvarying practice is the same —
The devil takes the hindmost, O!

And after death, we do not know,
But scarce can doubt, wher'er we go,
The devil takes the hindmost, O!

Ti rol de rol, ti rol de ro,
The devil takes the hindmost, O!
(1862)

## QUI LABORAT, ORAT

O only Source of all our light and life,
Whom as our truth, our strength, we see and feel,
But whom the hours of mortal moral strife
Alone aright reveal!

---

*In Stratis Viarum.* The title means *In Narrow Streets.*
1. **Blessed . . . seen.** From *John,* 20:29.—"Jesus said unto him, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'" 16. **twenty.** The Lord promised Abraham that the wicked city of Sodom would be saved if twenty righteous persons could be found in it (*Genesis,* 18:17-33).
*"What Went Ye Out for to See?"* The title is taken from *Matthew,* 11:7.—"What went ye out in the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?"
27-28. **He teacheth, etc.** The people were astonished at Christ's teaching in the synagogue, for "he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes" (*Mark,* 1:22).
*In the Great Metropolis.* 8. **On 'Change,** on the Exchange, the financial center of London.
*Qui Laborat, Orat.* The title means *He who Labors, Prays.*

Mine inmost soul, before Thee inly brought,
Thy presence owns ineffable, divine;
Chastised each rebel self-encentered thought,
My will adoreth Thine.

With eye down-dropped, if then this earthly mind
Speechless remain, or speechless e'en depart;
Nor seek to see — for what of earthly kind
Can see Thee as Thou art? —

If well-assured 'tis but profanely bold
In thought's abstractest forms to seem to see,
It dare not dare the dread communion hold
In ways unworthy Thee,

O not unowned, thou shalt unnamed forgive,
In worldly walks the prayerless heart prepare;
And if in work its life it seem to live,
Shalt make that work be prayer.

Nor times shall lack, when while the work it plies,
Unsummoned powers the blinding film shall part,
And scarce by happy tears made dim, the eyes
In recognition start.

But, as thou willest, give or e'en forbear
The beatific supersensual sight,
So, with Thy blessing blessed, that humbler prayer
Approach Thee morn and night. (1862)

## Ὕμνος ἄυμνος

O Thou whose image in the shrine
Of human spirits dwells divine;
Which from that precinct once conveyed,
To be to outer day displayed,
Doth vanish, part, and leave behind
Mere blank and void of empty mind,
Which willful fancy seeks in vain
With casual shapes to fill again!

O Thou that in our bosom's shrine
Dost dwell, unknown because divine!
I thought to speak, I thought to say,
"The light is here," "behold the way,"
"The voice was thus," and "thus the word,"
And "thus I saw," and "that I heard" —
But from the lips that half essayed
The imperfect utterance fell unmade.

O Thou, in that mysterious shrine
Enthroned, as I must say, divine!
I will not frame one thought of what
Thou mayest either be or not.
I will not prate of "thus" and "so,"
And be profane with "yes" and "no";
Enough that in our soul and heart
Thou, whatsoe'er Thou may'st be, art.

Unseen, secure in that high shrine
Acknowledged present and divine,
I will not ask some upper air,
Some future day to place Thee there;
Nor say, nor yet deny, such men
And women saw Thee thus and then;
Thy name was such, and there or here
To him or her Thou didst appear.

Do only Thou in that dim shrine,
Unknown or known, remain, divine;
There, or if not, at least in eyes
That scan the fact that round them lies,
The hand to sway, the judgment guide,
In sight and sense Thyself divide;
Be Thou but there — in soul and heart,
I will not ask to feel Thou art.
(1862)

## AH! YET CONSIDER IT AGAIN!

"Old things need not be therefore true."
O brother men, nor yet the new;
Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again!

The souls of now two thousand years
Have laid up here their toils and fears,
And all the earnings of their pain —
Ah, yet consider it again!

We! what do we see? each a space
Of some few yards before his face;
Does that the whole wide plan explain?
Ah, yet consider it again!

Alas! the great world goes its way,
And takes its truth from each new day;
They do not quit, nor can retain,
Far less consider it again. (*1851;* 1862)

## NOLI ÆMULARI

In controversial foul impureness
The peace that is thy light to thee
Quench not; in faith and inner sureness
Possess thy soul and let it be.

---

*Ὕμνος ἄυμνος.* The title means *The Unsung Hymn.*

*Noli Æmulari.* The title means *Do not Try to Emulate.*

No violence — perverse — persistent —
What cannot be can bring to be;
No zeal what is make more existent,
And strife but blinds the eyes that see.

What though in blood their souls embruing,
The great, the good and wise they curse,
Still sinning, what they know not doing;
Stand still, forbear, nor make it worse.

By curses, by denunciation,
The coming fate they cannot stay;
Nor thou, by fiery indignation,
Though just, accelerate the day. (1862)

## From *SONGS IN ABSENCE*

### Ye Flags of Piccadilly

Ye flags of Piccadilly,
Where I posted up and down,
And wished myself so often
Well away from you and town —

Are the people walking quietly
And steady on their feet,
Cabs and omnibuses plying
Just as usual in the street?

Do the houses look as upright
As of old they used to be,
And does nothing seem affected
By the pitching of the sea?

Through the Green Park iron railings
Do the quick pedestrians pass?
Are the little children playing
Round the plane-tree in the grass?

This squally wild north-wester
With which our vessel fights,
Does it merely serve with you to
Carry up some paper kites?

Ye flags of Piccadilly,
Which I hated so, I vow
I could wish with all my heart
You were underneath me now!

### O Ship, Ship, Ship

O ship, ship, ship,
That travelest over the sea,
What are the tidings, I pray thee,
Thou bearest hither to me?

Are they tidings of comfort and joy,
That shall make me seem to see
The sweet lips softly moving
And whispering love to me?

Or are they of trouble and grief,
Estrangement, sorrow, and doubt,
To turn into torture my hopes,
And drive me from Paradise out?

O ship, ship, ship,
That comest over the sea,
Whatever it be thou bringest,
Come quickly with it to me.
(*1852;* 1862)

## HOPE EVERMORE AND BELIEVE!

Hope evermore and believe, O man, for e'en as thy thought
So are the things that thou see'st; e'en as thy hope and belief.
Cowardly art thou and timid? they rise to provoke thee against them;
Hast thou courage? enough, see them exulting to yield.
Yea, the rough rock, the dull earth, the wild sea's furying waters
(Violent say'st thou and hard, mighty thou think'st to destroy),
All with ineffable longing are waiting their Invader,

All with one varying voice, call to him. Come and subdue;
Still for their Conqueror call, and, but for the joy of being conquered
(Rapture they will not forego), dare to resist and rebel;
Still, when resisting and raging, in soft undervoice say unto him,
Fear not, retire not, O man; hope evermore and believe.

Go from the east to the west, as the sun and the stars direct thee,
Go with the girdle of man, go and encompass the earth.
Not for the gain of the gold; for the getting, the hoarding, the having,
But for the joy of the deed; but for the Duty to do.
Go with the spiritual life, the higher volition and action,
With the great girdle of God, go and encompass the earth.

Go; say not in thy heart, And what then were it accomplished,
Were the wild impulse allayed, what were the use or the good!

---

*Songs in Absence.* This title covers a group of lyrics written by Clough on a journey to the United States in 1852. Most of the lyrics are addressed to the lady who became his wife.

1. **flags of Piccadilly**, flagstones of Piccadilly, a famous street in London.

Go, when the instinct is stilled, and when the deed is accomplished,
What thou hast done and shalt do, shall be declared to thee then.
Go with the sun and the stars, and yet evermore in thy spirit
Say to thyself: It is good; yet is there better than it.
This that I see is not all, and this that I do is but little;
Nevertheless it is good, though there is better than it.

(1862)

## THE LATEST DECALOGUE

Thou shalt have one God only; who
Would be at the expense of two?
No graven images may be
Worshiped, except the currency.
Swear not at all; for, for thy curse
Thine enemy is none the worse.
At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy friend.
Honor thy parents; that is, all
From whom advancement may befall.
Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive.
Do not adultery commit;
Advantage rarely comes of it.
Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,
When it's so lucrative to cheat.
Bear not false witness; let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly.
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition.

(1862)

## "WITH WHOM IS NO VARIABLENESS, NEITHER SHADOW OF TURNING"

It fortifies my soul to know
That, though I perish, Truth is so;
That, howsoe'er I stray and range,
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.
I steadier step when I recall
That, if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

(1862)

## THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

What we, when face to face we see
The Father of our souls, shall be,
John tells us, doth not yet appear;
Ah! did he tell what we are here!

A mind for thoughts to pass into,
A heart for loves to travel through,
Five senses to detect things near —
Is this the whole that we are here?

Rules baffle instincts — instincts rules,
Wise men are bad — and good are fools,
Facts evil — wishes vain appear;
We cannot go, why are we here?

Oh, may we for assurance' sake,
Some arbitrary judgment take,
And willfully pronounce it clear,
For this or that 'tis we are here?

Or is it right, and will it do,
To pace the sad confusion through,
And say: it doth not yet appear,
What we shall be, what we are here?

Ah, yet, when all is thought and said,
The heart still overrules the head;
Still what we hope we must believe,
And what is given us receive;

Must still believe, for still we hope
That in a world of larger scope,
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed, not undone.

My child, we still must think, when we
That ampler life together see,
Some true result will yet appear
Of what we are, together, here.

(1862)

## ITE DOMUM SATURÆ, VENIT HESPERUS

The skies have sunk, and hid the upper snow
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie),
The rainy clouds are filing fast below,
And wet will be the path, and wet shall we.
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

---

*Hope Evermore and Believe!* 24. **good . . . better than it.** Cf. Browning's *Saul*, 295, page 219.

*Through a Glass Darkly.* The title is taken from *1 Corinthians*, 13:12.—"For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face."

3. **John tells us,** in *1 John*, 3:2.—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

*Ite Domum Saturæ, Venit Hesperus.* The title means *Go Home Satisfied; Hesperus* [*the evening star*] *Comes.* It is taken from a line in the tenth *Eclogue* of Virgil, in which a goatherd is addressing his herd: "Go home full-fed; Hesperus comes." Clough makes the speaker a peasant girl who is driving home her cows, named Rose, Provence, and La Palie.

Ah dear, and where is he, a year agone,
Who stepped beside and cheered us on and on?
My sweetheart wanders far away from me,
In foreign land or on a foreign sea.
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

The lightning zigzags shoot across the sky
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie),
And through the vale the rains go sweeping by;
Ah me, and when in shelter shall we be?
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

Cold, dreary cold, the stormy winds feel they
O'er foreign lands and foreign seas that stray
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie).
And doth he e'er, I wonder, bring to mind
The pleasant huts and herds he left behind?
And doth he sometimes in his slumbering see
The feeding kine, and doth he think of me,
My sweetheart wandering wheresoe'er it be?
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.
The thunder bellows far from snow to snow
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie),
And loud and louder roars the flood below.
Heigho! but soon in shelter shall we be;
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

Or shall he find before his term be sped,
Some comelier maid that he shall wish to wed?
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie),
For weary is work, and weary day by day
To have your comfort miles on miles away.
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

Or may it be that I shall find my mate,
And he returning see himself too late?
For work we must, and what we see, we see,
And God, He knows, and what must be, must be,
When sweethearts wander far away from me.
Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie.

The sky behind is brightening up anew
(Home, Rose, and home, Provence and La Palie),
The rain is ending, and our journey too;
Heigho! aha! for here at home are we —
In, Rose, and in, Provence and La Palie.

(1862)

## PERCHE PENSA? PENSANDO S'INVECCHIA

To spend uncounted years of pain,
Again, again, and yet again,
In working out in heart and brain
The problem of our being here;
To gather facts from far and near,
Upon the mind to hold them clear,
And, knowing more may yet appear,
Unto one's latest breath to fear,
The premature result to draw —
Is this the object, end and law,
And purpose of our being here?

(1869)

## LIFE IS STRUGGLE

To wear out heart, and nerves, and brain,
And give oneself a world of pain;
Be eager, angry, fierce, and hot,
Imperious, supple — God knows what,
For what's all one to have or not;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
For 'tis not joy, it is not gain,
It is not in itself a bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us all alive.

To say we truly feel the pain,
And quite are sinking with the strain; —
Entirely, simply, undeceived,
Believe, and say we ne'er believed
The object, e'en were it achieved,
A thing we e'er had cared to keep;
With heart and soul to hold it cheap,
And then to go and try it again;
O false, unwise, absurd, and vain!
Oh, 'tis not joy, and 'tis not bliss,
Only it is precisely this
That keeps us still alive.

(1869)

## IN A LONDON SQUARE

Put forth thy leaf, thou lofty plane —
East wind and frost are safely gone;
With zephyr mild and balmy rain
The summer comes serenely on;
Earth, air, and sun and skies combine
To promise all that's kind and fair.

---

*Perche Pensa? Pensando S'Invecchia.* The title means *Why Think? By Thinking You Grow Old.*

But thou, O human heart of mine,
Be still, contain thyself, and bear.

December days were brief and chill,
The winds of March were wild and drear,
And, nearing and receding still,
Spring never would, we thought, be here.
The leaves that burst, the suns that shine,
Had, not the less, their certain date —
And thou, O human heart of mine,
Be still, refrain thyself, and wait. (1869)

## ALL IS WELL

Whate'er you dream, with doubt possessed,
Keep, keep it snug within your breast,
And lay you down and take your rest;
Forget in sleep the doubt and pain,
And when you wake, to work again.
The wind it blows, the vessel goes,
And where and whither, no one knows.

'Twill all be well — no need of care;
Though how it will, and when, and where,
We cannot see, and can't declare.
In spite of dreams, in spite of thought,
'Tis not in vain, and not for naught,
The wind it blows, the ship it goes,
Though where and whither, no one knows.
(1869)

# EDWARD FITZGERALD (1809-1883)

## THE RUBÂIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÂM

1

Wake! For the Sun, who scattered into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

2

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
"When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshiper outside?"

3

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted — "Open, then, the Door!
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

4

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the White Hand of Moses on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

5

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ringed Cup where no one knows;
But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

6

And David's lips are locked; but in divine
High-piping Pehleví, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
Red Wine!" — the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of hers to incarnadine.

7

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling;
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter — and the Bird is on the Wing.

8

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

9

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

---

*The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.* Omar Khayyám (Omar the Tent-Maker) was a Persian poet and astronomer of the 11th century. *Rubáiyát* is the plural form of *rubaíy*, meaning *quatrain*. See Critical Notes.

5. **False morning**, a transient light on the horizon about an hour before the true dawn—a common phenomenon in the East. (FitzGerald's note.)

13. **New Year.** The Persian new year begins with the vernal equinox. 15. **White Hand . . . Bough.** At the command of the Lord, Moses put his hand into his bosom and "when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow" (*Exodus*, 4:6). The metaphor is applied to the blooming of the flowers. 16. **Jesus . . . suspires.** The Persians believed that the healing power of Jesus resided in his breath. 17. **Iram**, an ancient Persian garden, now obliterated. 18. **Jamshyd**, a legendary king of Persia. His seven-ringed cup was symbolical of the seven heavens, the seven planets, the seven seas, etc. 21-22. **David . . . Pehleví.** David's tongue is forgotten, but the nightingale still cries in Pehleví, the ancient literary language of Persia. 29. **Naishápúr**, a village in Persia; Omar's native place. 36. **Kaikobád**, the founder of the most celebrated of the dynasties of ancient Persia.

10

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?
Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hátim call to Supper — heed not you.

11

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot —
And Peace to Mahmúd on his golden Throne!

12

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread — and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

13

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

14

Look to the blowing Rose about us — "Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

15

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turned
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

16

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes — or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two — is gone.

17

Think, in this battered Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

18

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahrám, that great Hunter — the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

19

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropped in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

20

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean —
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

21

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
TODAY of past Regrets and future Fears:
*Tomorrow!* — Why, Tomorrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

22

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

23

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend — ourselves to make a Couch — for whom?

24

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and — sans End!

38. **Kaikhosrú**, a famous Persian hero, identified with Cyrus the Great (6th century B.C.), the founder of the Persian Empire. 39. **Zál and Rustum**, famous Persian heroes; Zál was the father of Rustum. (See Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum* and introductory note, page 459.) 40. **Hátim**, a type of Oriental Generosity. (FitzGerald's note.) 44. **Mahmúd**, the Sultan. Mahmúd the Great (c. 970-1030) was the famous Mohammedan conqueror of India. He was sultan of Ghazni, the city of his birth in Afghanistan. 50. **the Prophet**, Mohammed. 57. **Golden grain**, wealth. 65. **Caravanserai**, a kind of Oriental inn, where caravans rest at night.

70. **Courts.** Jamshyd's capital was Persepolis. 71. **Bahrám**, a Persian ruler who lost his life in a swamp while hunting a wild ass. 75. **Hyacinth**, a flower named after Hyacinthus, a youth accidentally killed by his friend, Apollo, god of the sun. The flower sprang up where the blood of Hyacinthus flowed upon the ground. 84. **Sev'n thousand Years**, a thousand years to each planet. 96. **Sans**, without.

25

Alike for those who for TODAY prepare,
And those that after some TOMORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,
"Fools, your Reward is neither Here nor There."

26

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discussed
Of the Two Worlds so wisely — they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scattered, and their Mouths are stopped with Dust.

27

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about; but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

28

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reaped —
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

29

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

30

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence!

31

Up from the Earth's Center through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a Knot unraveled by the Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

32

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see;
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was — and then no more of THEE and ME.

33

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs revealed
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

34

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without — "THE ME WITHIN THEE BLIND!"

35

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I leaned, the Secret of my Life to learn;
And Lip to Lip it murmured — "While you live,
Drink! — for, once dead, you never shall return."

36

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answered, once did live,
And drink; and Ah! the passive Lip I kissed,
How many Kisses might it take — and give!

37

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay;
And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmured — "Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

38

And has not such a Story from of Old
Down Man's successive generations rolled
Of such a clod of saturated Earth
Cast by the Maker into Human mold?

39

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
For Earth to drink of, but may steal below
To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye
There hidden — far beneath, and long ago.

---

99. **Muezzín**, the officer who summons the faithful to prayer in Mohammedan countries. 119. **forbidden Wine.** Orthodox Mohammedanism regards the use of wine as one of twelve capital sins. 122. **Saturn**, the lord of the seventh heaven, one of the concentric spheres into which, according to the ancients, the space around the earth was divided.

131. **Signs**, the signs of the zodiac. 153-154. **drop . . . Earth.** It was an old custom to throw a little wine on the ground before drinking; it refreshed some wine-drinker who had gone before.

40

As then the Tulip, for her morning sup
Of Heav'nly Vintage, from the soil looks up,
Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you — like an empty Cup.

41

Perplexed no more with Human or Divine,
Tomorrow's tangle to the winds resign,
And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

42

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in — Yes;
Think that you are Today what Yesterday
You were — Tomorrow you shall not be less.

43

So when that Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
And offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff — you shall not shrink.

44

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Were 't not a Shame — were 't not a Shame for him
In this clay carcass crippled to abide?

45

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death addrest;
The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

46

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Sákí from that Bowl has poured
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

47

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

48

A Moment's Halt — a momentary taste
Of Being from the Well amid the Waste —
And Lo! — the phantom Caravan has reached
The Nothing it set out from — Oh, make haste!

49

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About the secret — quick about it, Friend!
A Hair perhaps divides the False and True —
And upon what, prithee, does life depend?

50

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True —
Yes; and a single Alif were the clue —
Could you but find it — to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to The Master too;

51

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins
Running Quicksilver-like, eludes your pains;
Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi; and
They change and perish all — but He remains;

52

A moment guessed — then back behind the Fold
Immersed of Darkness round the Drama rolled
Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

53

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door,
You gaze Today, while You are You — how then
Tomorrow, when You shall be You no more?

54

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavor and dispute;
Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

55

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house;
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

---

164. **Cypress-slender . . . Wine**, the maiden who passes the wine; she is as slender as a cypress. Stanza 42 stresses the joy of wine mingled with the joy of love. 179. **Ferrásh**, a servant, a camp-follower. 183. **Sákí**, wine-bearer.

198. **Alif**, the first letter of certain ancient alphabets. 203. **from Máh to Máhi**, from fish to moon.

56

For "Is" and "Is-not" though with Rule and Line,
And "Up-and-down" by Logic, I define,
Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but — Wine.

57

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Reduced the Year to better reckoning? — Nay,
'Twas only striking from the Calendar
Unborn Tomorrow, and dead Yesterday.

58

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 'twas — the Grape!

59

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute;
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute;

60

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

61

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare
Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare?
A Blessing, we should use it, should we not?
And if a Curse — why, then, Who set it there?

62

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,
To fill the Cup — when crumbled into Dust!

63

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain — *This* Life flies;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies —
The Flower that once has blown forever dies.

64

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

65

The Revelations of Devout and Learned
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burned,
Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep,
They told their comrades, and to Sleep returned.

66

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell;
And by and by my Soul returned to me,
And answered, "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell" —

67

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfilled Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

68

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

69

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Checker-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

70

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes;
And He that tossed you down into the Field,
*He* knows about it all — HE knows — HE knows!

71

The Moving Finger writes, and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

72

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling cooped we live and die,

---

225. **Computations.** Omar was a learned astronomer and was one of eight men employed to reform the calendar. 234. **Two-and-Seventy,** the number of religions that were supposed to be in the world. 237. **Mahmúd.** See note on line 44. **Allah-breathing.** Mahmúd worshiped Allah, the deity among the Mohammedans, and forced others to do so. 252. **blown,** bloomed.

277. **The Ball,** etc., a reference to the game of polo, of ancient Persian origin.

Lift not your hands to *It* for help — for It
As impotently moves as you or I.

73

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sowed the Seed;
And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

74

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did prepare;
TOMORROW'S Silence, Triumph, or Despair.
Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why;
Drink, for you know not why you go, nor where.

75

I tell you this — When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtarí they flung,
In my predestined Plot of Dust and Soul

76

The Vine had struck a fiber; which about
If clings my Being — let the Dervish flout;
Of my Base metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

77

And this I know: whether the one True Light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath—consume me quite,
One Flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

78

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!

79

What! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allayed —
Sue for a Debt he never did contract,
And cannot answer — Oh, the sorry trade!

80

O Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

81

Oh Thou, who Man of Baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake,
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened — Man's forgiveness give — and take!

. . . . .

82

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay —

83

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall;
And some loquacious Vessels were; and some
Listened perhaps, but never talked at all.

84

Said one among them — "Surely not in vain
My substance of the common Earth was ta'en
And to this Figure molded, to be broke,
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again."

85

Then said a Second — "Ne'er a peevish Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy;
And He that with his hand the Vessel made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."

86

After a momentary silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make:
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry;
What! did the Hand, then, of the Potter shake?"

87

Whereat someone of the loquacious Lot —
I think a Súfi pipkin — waxing hot —
"All this of Pot and Potter — Tell me then,
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

88

"Why," said another, "Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell

---

298-299. **Foal Of Heav'n,** an equatorial constellation known as Equuleus (the Little Horse). 299. **Parwin and Mushtari,** the Pleiades and Jupiter. 302. **Dervish,** a Mohammedan devotee. 317. **Gin,** trap.

326. **Ramazán,** the fasting month of the Mohammedans, during which no food is eaten between sunrise and sunset. 346. **Súfi,** a member of a Persian sect of mystics whose purpose was to gain insight into the Divine Being through ecstasy and contemplation.

The luckless Pots he marred in making — Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well."

89

"Well," murmured one, "Let whoso make or buy,
My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry;
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by and by."

90

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking
The little Moon looked in that all were seeking;
And then they jogged each other, "Brother! Brother!
Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

. . . . .

91

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side —

92

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

93

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in this World much wrong,
Have drowned my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

94

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore — but was I sober when I swore?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

95

And much as Wine has played the Infidel,
And robbed me of my Robe of Honor — Well,
I wonder often what the Vintners buy
One-half so precious as the stuff they sell.

96

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

97

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse — if dimly, yet indeed, revealed,
To which the fainting Traveler might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

98

Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

99

Ah, Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
Remold it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

. . . . .

100

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again —
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden — and for *one* in vain!

101

And when like her, O Sákí, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scattered on the Grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One — turn down an empty Glass! (1859, 1868, 1872, 1879)

## MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

### QUIET WORK

One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson which in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity —
Of toil unsevered from tranquillity!
Of labor, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

---

358. **Moon . . . seeking,** the new moon, which would mark the end of the fasting period. 360. **shoulder-knot a-creaking,** with the load of wine he was carrying. The shoulder-knot was a strap on which the jars were hung. 369. **Idols,** wine and wine-poetry.

401. **Sákí,** wine-bearer.

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Laborers that shall not fail, when man is gone.
(1849)

## MYCERINUS

"Not by the justice that my father spurned,
Not for the thousands whom my father slew,
Altars unfed and temples overturned,
Cold hearts and thankless tongues, where thanks are due;
Fell this dread voice from lips that cannot lie,
Stern sentence of the Powers of Destiny.

"I will unfold my sentence and my crime.
My crime — that, rapt in reverential awe,
I sate obedient, in the fiery prime
Of youth, self-governed, at the feet of Law;
Ennobling this dull pomp, the life of kings,
By contemplation of diviner things.

"My father loved injustice, and lived long;
Crowned with gray hairs he died, and full of sway.
I loved the good he scorned, and hated wrong —
The gods declare my recompense today.
I looked for life more lasting, rule more high;
And when six years are measured, lo, I die!

"Yet surely, O my people, did I deem
Man's justice from the all-just gods was given;
A light that from some upper fount did beam,
Some better archetype, whose seat was heaven;
A light that, shining from the blest abodes,
Did shadow somewhat of the life of gods.

"Mere phantoms of man's self-tormenting heart,
Which on the sweets that woo it dares not feed!
Vain dreams, which quench our pleasures, then depart,
When the duped soul, self-mastered, claims its meed;
When, on the strenuous just man, Heaven bestows,
Crown of his struggling life, an unjust close!

"Seems it so light a thing, then, austere Powers,
To spurn man's common lure, life's pleasant things?
Seems there no joy in dances crowned with flowers,
Love, free to range, and regal banquetings?
Bend ye on these, indeed, an unmoved eye,
Not gods but ghosts, in frozen apathy?

"Or is it that some Force, too wise, too strong,
Even for yourselves to conquer or beguile,
Sweeps earth, and heaven, and men, and gods along,
Like the broad volume of the insurgent Nile?
And the great powers we serve, themselves may be
Slaves of a tyrannous necessity?

"Or in mid-heaven, perhaps, your golden cars,
Where earthly voice climbs never, wing their flight,
And in wild hunt, through mazy tracts of stars,
Sweep in the sounding stillness of the night?
Or in deaf ease, on thrones of dazzling sheen,
Drinking deep drafts of joy, ye dwell serene?

"Oh, wherefore cheat our youth, if thus it be,
Of one short joy, one lust, one pleasant dream?
Stringing vain words of powers we cannot see,
Blind divinations of a will supreme;
Lost labor! when the circumambient gloom
But hides, if gods, gods careless of our doom?

"The rest I give to joy. Even while I speak,
My sand runs short; and — as yon star-shot ray,
Hemmed by two banks of cloud, peers pale and weak,
Now, as the barrier closes, dies away —
Even so do past and future intertwine,
Blotting this six years' space, which yet is mine.

"Six years — six little years — six drops of time!
Yet suns shall rise, and many moons shall wane,
And old men die, and young men pass their prime,
And languid pleasure fade and flower again,
And the dull gods behold, ere these are flown,
Revels more deep, joy keener than their own.

---

*Mycerinus.* Mycerinus, or Mankaura, was king of Egypt about 2800 B.C. His father, Cheops, was noted for his unjust rule and a long happy life. Mycerinus was warned by an oracle that he would live only six years, and in the poem he protests against the injustice of his fate. The story is told by the Greek historian Herodotus (4th century B.C.) in Book II, Chapter 129.

40. **insurgent Nile.** The Nile is called "insurgent" because it overflows its banks each spring.

"Into the silence of the groves and woods
I will go forth, though something would I say —
Something — yet what, I know not; for the gods
The doom they pass revoke not, nor delay;
And prayers, and gifts, and tears, are fruitless all,
And the night waxes, and the shadows fall.

"Ye men of Egypt, ye have heard your king!
I go, and I return not. But the will
Of the great gods is plain; and ye must bring
Ill deeds, ill passions, zealous to fulfill
Their pleasure, to their feet; and reap their praise,
The praise of gods, rich boon! and length of days."

— So spake he, half in anger, half in scorn;
And one loud cry of grief and of amaze
Broke from his sorrowing people; so he spake,
And turning, left them there; and with brief pause,
Girt with a throng of revelers, bent his way
To the cool region of the groves he loved.
There by the river-banks he wandered on,
From palm-grove on to palm-grove, happy trees,
Their smooth tops shining sunward, and beneath
Burying their unsunned stems in grass and flowers;
Where in one dream the feverish time of youth
Might fade in slumber, and the feet of joy
Might wander all day long and never tire.
Here came the king, holding high feast, at morn,
Rose-crowned; and ever, when the sun went down,
A hundred lamps beamed in the tranquil gloom,
From tree to tree all through the twinkling grove,
Revealing all the tumult of the feast —
Flushed guests, and golden goblets foamed with wine;
While the deep-burnished foliage overhead
Splintered the silver arrows of the moon.
  It may be that sometimes his wondering soul
From the loud joyful laughter of his lips
Might shrink half startled, like a guilty man
Who wrestles with his dream; as some pale shape
Gliding half hidden through the dusky stems,
Would thrust a hand before the lifted bowl,
Whispering, "A little space, and thou art mine!"
It may be on that joyless feast his eye
Dwelt with mere outward seeming; he, within,
Took measure of his soul, and knew its strength,
And by that silent knowledge, day by day,
Was calmed, ennobled, comforted, sustained.
It may be; but not less his brow was smooth,
And his clear laugh fled ringing through the gloom,
And his mirth quailed not at the mild reproof
Sighed out by winter's sad tranquillity;
Nor, palled with its own fullness, ebbed and died
In the rich languor of long summer-days;
Nor withered when the palm-tree plumes, that roofed
With their mild dark his grassy banquet-hall,
Bent to the cold winds of the showerless spring;
No, nor grew dark when autumn brought the clouds.
  So six long years he reveled, night and day,
And when the mirth waxed loudest, with dull sound
Sometimes from the grove's center echoes came,
To tell his wondering people of their king;
In the still night, across the steaming flats,
Mixed with the murmur of the moving Nile.
(1849)

## TO A FRIEND

Who prop, thou ask'st, in these bad days, my mind? —
He much, the old man, who, clearest-souled of men,
Saw The Wide Prospect, and the Asian Fen,
And Tmolus' Hill, and Smyrna Bay, though blind.
Much he, whose friendship I not long since won,
That halting slave, who in Nicopolis
Taught Arrian, when Vespasian's brutal son
Cleared Rome of what most shamed him. But be his
My special thanks, whose even-balanced soul,

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108-112. **he, within . . . smooth.** These lines sound the Stoic note of Arnold's poetry.

*To a Friend.* 2. **the old man**, Homer, who was said to be blind. 3. **The Wide Prospect**, Europe (a literal translation of the Greek word Εὐρώπη). **Asian Fens**, the marshy, low-lying districts along the rivers in Asia Minor. 4. **Tmolus' Hill**, a mountain in Lydia, Asia Minor. **Smyrna Bay.** Smyrna is the chief seaport of Asia Minor. 6. **slave**, Epictetus (c. 60- c. 120 A.D.), the Stoic philosopher, who was lame and at one time a slave. He lived at Nicopolis, Greece, after he was banished from Rome by the Emperor Domitian, the brutal son of Vespasian. One of the pupils of Epictetus was Arrian, a famous philosopher and historian. 8. **his**, a reference to Sophocles (497-406 B.C.), the Athenian dramatist whose plays are noted for their serenity. He was born at Colonus (line 14), a village near Athens.

From first youth tested up to extreme old
age;
Business could not make dull, nor passion
wild;
Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole;
The mellow glory of the Attic stage,
Singer of sweet Colonus, and its child.

(1849)

## THE SICK KING IN BOKHARA

HUSSEIN

O most just Vizier, send away
The cloth-merchants, and let them be,
Them and their dues, this day! The King
Is ill at ease, and calls for thee.

THE VIZIER

O merchants, tarry yet a day
Here in Bokhara! but at noon,
Tomorrow, come, and ye shall pay
Each fortieth web of cloth to me,
As the law is, and go your way.
O Hussein, lead me to the King!
Thou teller of sweet tales, thine own,
Ferdousi's, and the others', lead!
How is it with my lord?

HUSSEIN

Alone,
Ever since prayer-time, he doth wait,
O Vizier! without lying down,
In the great window of the gate,
Looking into the Registàn,
Where through the sellers' booths the slaves
Are this way bringing the dead man.—
O Vizier, here is the King's door!

THE KING

O Vizier, I may bury him?

THE VIZIER

O King, thou know'st, I have been sick
These many days, and heard no thing
(For Allah shut my ears and mind),
Not even what thou dost, O King!
Wherefore, that I may counsel thee,
Let Hussein, if thou wilt, make haste
To speak in order what hath chanced.

THE KING

O Vizier, be it as thou say'st!

HUSSEIN

Three days since, at the time of prayer
A certain Moollah, with his robe
All rent, and dust upon his hair,
Watched my lord's coming forth, and pushed
The golden mace-bearers aside,
And fell at the King's feet, and cried:

"Justice, O King, and on myself!
On this great sinner, who did break
The law, and by the law must die!
Vengeance, O King!"

But the King spake:
"What fool is this, that hurts our ears
With folly? or what drunken slave?
My guards, what, prick him with your spears!
Prick me the fellow from the path!"
As the King said, so it was done,
And to the mosque my lord passed on.

But on the morrow, when the King
Went forth again, the holy book
Carried before him, as is right,
And through the square his way he took;
My man comes running, flecked with blood
From yesterday, and falling down,
Cries out most earnestly: "O King,
My lord, O King, do right, I pray!

"How canst thou, ere thou hear, discern
If I speak folly? but a king,
Whether a thing be great or small,
Like Allah, hears and judges all.

"Wherefore hear thou! Thou know'st, how
fierce
In these last days the sun hath burned;
That the green water in the tanks
Is to a putrid puddle turned;
And the canal, which from the stream
Of Samarcand is brought this way,
Wastes, and runs thinner every day.

"Now I at nightfall had gone forth
Alone, and in a darksome place
Under some mulberry-trees I found
A little pool; and in short space,
With all the water that was there
I filled my pitcher, and stole home
Unseen; and having drink to spare,
I hid the can behind the door,
And went up on the roof to sleep.

"But in the night, which was with wind
And burning dust, again I creep
Down, having fever, for a drink.

---

*The Sick King in Bokhara.* Bokhara was the ancient capital of a large area in central Asia. It was a famous money market, the chief trade center between China and Western Asia. The Vizier was a minister of state.

12. **Ferdousi**, the epic poet of Persia (940-1020). His *Shah Namah* (*Book of Kings*) contains the legends of his country, including the story of Sohrab and Rustum. 17. **the Registàn**, the market-place. 24. **Allah**, the name of the Mohammedan God; the word means *worthy to be adored.*

31. **Moollah**, a learned teacher of Mohammedan law and dogma. 62-63. **stream Of Samarcand**, the Zerafshan River, which supplied water to the city of Samarcand, east of Bokhara.

"Now meanwhile had my brethren found
The water-pitcher, where it stood
Behind the door upon the ground,
And called my mother; and they all,
As they were thirsty, and the night
Most sultry, drained the pitcher there;
That they sate with it, in my sight,
Their lips still wet, when I came down.

"Now mark! I, being fevered, sick
(Most unblest also), at that sight
Brake forth, and cursed them — dost thou hear? —
One was my mother — Now, do right!"

But my lord mused a space, and said:
"Send him away, Sirs, and make on!
It is some madman!" the King said.
As the King bade, so was it done.

The morrow, at the self-same hour,
In the King's path, behold, the man,
Not kneeling, sternly fixed! he stood
Right opposite, and thus began,
Frowning grim down: "Thou wicked King,
Most deaf where thou shouldst most give ear!
What, must I howl in the next world,
Because thou wilt not listen here?

"What, wilt thou pray, and get thee grace,
And all grace shall to me be grudged?
Nay but, I swear, from this thy path
I will not stir till I be judged!"
Then they who stood about the King
Drew close together and conferred;
Till that the King stood forth and said:
"Before the priests thou shalt be heard."

But when the Ulemas were met,
And the thing heard, they doubted not;
But sentenced him, as the law is,
To die by stoning on the spot.

Now the King charged us secretly:
"Stoned must he be, the law stands so.
Yet, if he seek to fly, give way;
Hinder him not, but let him go."

So saying, the King took a stone,
And cast it softly — but the man,
With a great joy upon his face,
Kneeled down, and cried not, neither ran.

So they, whose lot it was, cast stones,
That they flew thick and bruised him sore.
But he praised Allah with loud voice,
And remained kneeling as before.

My lord had covered up his face;
But when one told him, "He is dead,"
Turning him quickly to go in,
"Bring thou to me his corpse," he said.

And truly, while I speak, O King,
I hear the bearers on the stair;
Wilt thou they straightway bring him in?
— Ho! enter ye who tarry there!

### THE VIZIER

O King, in this I praise thee not!
Now must I call thy grief not wise.
Is he thy friend, or of thy blood,
To find such favor in thine eyes?

Nay, were he thine own mother's son,
Still, thou art king, and the law stands.
It were not meet the balance swerved,
The sword were broken in thy hands.

But being nothing, as he is,
Why for no cause make sad thy face? —
Lo, I am old! three kings, ere thee,
Have I seen reigning in this place.

But who, through all this length of time,
Could bear the burden of his years,
If he for strangers pained his heart
Not less than those who merit tears?

Fathers we *must* have, wife and child,
And grievous is the grief for these;
This pain alone, which *must* be borne,
Makes the head white, and bows the knees.

But other loads than this his own
One man is not well made to bear.
Besides, to each are his own friends,
To mourn with him, and show him care.

Look, this is but one single place,
Though it be great; all the earth round,
If a man bear to have it so,
Things which might vex him shall be found.

Upon the Russian frontier, where
The watchers of two armies stand
Near one another, many a man,
Seeking a prey unto his hand,

Hath snatched a little fair-haired slave;
They snatch also, toward Mervè,
The Shiah dogs, who pasture sheep,
And up from thence to Orgunjè.

And these all, laboring for a lord,
Eat not the fruit of their own hands;

---

109. **Ulemas**, the wise men who interpreted the law.

166. **Mervè**, a city south of Bokhara. 167. **Shiah dogs**, the Shiites, one of the two sects of Mohammedans who do not consider the body of traditions regarding Mohammed as a part of the law. 168. **Orgunjè**, a city on the Amu River near the Aral Sea, in central Asia.

Which is the heaviest of all plagues,
To that man's mind, who understands.

The kaffirs also (whom God curse!)
Vex one another, night and day;
There are the lepers, and all sick;
There are the poor, who faint alway.

All these have sorrow, and keep still,
Whilst other men make cheer, and sing.
Wilt thou have pity on all these?
No, nor on this dead dog, O King!

THE KING

O Vizier, thou art old, I young!
Clear in these things I cannot see.
My head is burning, and a heat
Is in my skin which angers me.

But hear ye this, ye sons of men!
They that bear rule, and are obeyed,
Unto a rule more strong than theirs
Are in their turn obedient made.

In vain therefore, with wistful eyes
Gazing up hither, the poor man,
Who loiters by the high-heaped booths,
Below there, in the Registàn,

Says: "Happy he, who lodges there!
With silken raiment, store of rice,
And for this drought, all kinds of fruits,
Grape-syrup, squares of colored ice,

"With cherries served in drifts of snow."
In vain hath a king power to build
Houses, arcades, enameled mosques;
And to make orchard-closes, filled

With curious fruit-trees brought from far,
With cisterns for the winter-rain,
And, in the desert, spacious inns
In divers places — if that pain

Is not more lightened, which he feels,
If his will be not satisfied;
And that it be not, from all time
The law is planted, to abide.

Thou wast a sinner, thou poor man!
Thou wast athirst; and didst not see,
That, though we take what we desire,
We must not snatch it eagerly.

And I have meat and drink at will,
And rooms of treasures, not a few.
But I am sick, nor heed I these;
And what I would, I cannot do.

Even the great honor which I have,
When I am dead, will soon grow still;
So have I neither joy nor fame.
But what I can do, that I will.

I have a fretted brick-work tomb
Upon a hill on the right hand,
Hard by a close of apricots,
Upon the road of Samarcand;

Thither, O Vizier, will I bear
This man my pity could not save,
And, plucking up the marble flags,
There lay his body in my grave.

Bring water, nard, and linen rolls!
Wash off all blood, set smooth each limb!
Then say: "He was not wholly vile,
Because a king shall bury him." (1849)

## SHAKESPEARE

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask — thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge. For the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spares but the cloudy border of his base
To the foiled searching of mortality;
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure,
Didst tread on earth unguessed at. — Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.
(1849)

## IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

### TO A PREACHER

"In harmony with Nature?" Restless fool,
Who with such heat dost preach what were to thee,
When true, the last impossibility —
To be like Nature strong, like Nature cool!
Know, man hath all which Nature hath, but more,

---

173. **kaffirs**, disbelievers in the Mohammedan religion.

223. **close**, an enclosed place. 229. **nard**, a kind of ointment.

*Shakespeare.* 1. **Others . . . free.** Other poets we can understand. Thou art not understandable.

*In Harmony with Nature.* This poem is addressed to a preacher who had urged his audience to live in harmony with nature.

And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good.
Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;
Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore;
Nature is fickle, man hath need of rest;
Nature forgives no debt, and fears no grave;
Man would be mild, and with safe conscience blest.
Man must begin, know this, where Nature ends;
Nature and man can never be fast friends.
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her slave!
(1849)

## TO A REPUBLICAN FRIEND, 1848

God knows it, I am with you. If to prize
Those virtues, prized and practiced by too few,
But prized, but loved, but eminent in you,
Man's fundamental life; if to despise
The barren optimistic sophistries
Of comfortable moles, whom what they do
Teaches the limit of the just and true
(And for such doing they require not eyes);
If sadness at the long heart-wasting show
Wherein earth's great ones are disquieted;
If thoughts, not idle, while before me flow
The armies of the homeless and unfed —
If these are yours, if this is what you are,
Then am I yours, and what you feel, I share.
(1849)

## CONTINUED

Yet, when I muse on what life is, I seem
Rather to patience prompted, than that proud
Prospect of hope which France proclaims so loud —
France, famed in all great arts, in none supreme;
Seeing this vale, this earth, whereon we dream,
Is on all sides o'ershadowd by the high
Uno'erleaped Mountains of Necessity,
Sparing us narrower margin than we deem.
Nor will that day dawn at a human nod,
When, bursting through the network superposed
By selfish occupation — plot and plan,
Lust, avarice, envy — liberated man,
All difference with his fellow-mortal closed,
Shall be left standing face to face with God.
(1849)

## TO FAUSTA

Joy comes and goes; hope ebbs and flows,
Like the wave.
Change doth unknit the tranquil strength of men.
Love lends life a little grace,
A few sad smiles; and then,
Both are laid in one cold place,
In the grave.

Dreams dawn and fly; friends smile and die,
Like spring flowers.
Our vaunted life is one long funeral.
Men dig graves, with bitter tears,
For their dead hopes; and all,
Mazed with doubts, and sick with fears,
Count the hours.

We count the hours; these dreams of ours,
False and hollow,
Shall we go hence and find they are not dead?
Joys we dimly apprehend,
Faces that smiled and fled,
Hopes born here, and born to end,
Shall we follow?
(1849)

## THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go —
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain —
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!

---

*To a Republican Friend.* The friend is probably Clough. The year 1848 was marked by various revolutions on the Continent, beginning with the overthrow of the monarchy in France.

*Continued.* With this sonnet cf. Tennyson's *You Ask Me, Why* and *Love Thou Thy Land*, pages 35, 36.

3. **France proclaims**, referring to the establishment of the republic in 1848.

*To Fausta.* Fausta is thought to be Arnold's sister Jane.

*The Forsaken Merman.* Folklore has many tales dealing with relations between mortals and mermen or mermaids. This story belongs to Danish legend.

13. **Margaret**, a favorite name with Arnold. See *Switzerland*, page 440.

One last look at the white-walled town,
And the little gray church on the windy shore,
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;
Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children, dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea;
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little gray church on the shore today.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world — ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little gray church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."
But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were sealed to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children;
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,

---

69. **sea-stocks,** sea gillyflowers.

82. **shut . . . door.** According to popular belief, heaven and the benefits of Christianity are denied fairies and certain other supernatural beings.

But faithless was she!
And alone dwell forever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starred with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanched sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hillside —
And then come back down,
Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely forever
The kings of the sea." (1849)

## IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS

If, in the silent mind of One all-pure,
At first imagined lay
The sacred world; and by procession sure
From those still deeps, in form and color drest,
Seasons alternating, and night and day,
The long-mused thought to north, south, east, and west,
Took then its all-seen way;

O waking on a world which thus-wise springs!
Whether it needs thee count
Betwixt thy waking and the birth of things
Ages or hours — O waking on life's stream!
By lonely pureness to the all-pure fount
(Only by this thou canst) the colored dream
Of life remount!

Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow,
And faint the city gleams;
Rare the lone pastoral huts — marvel not thou!
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars, and the cold lunar beams;
Alone the sun arises, and alone
Spring the great streams.

But, if the wild unfathered mass no birth
In divine seats hath known;
In the blank, echoing solitude if Earth,
Rocking her obscure body to and fro,
Ceases not from all time to heave and groan,
Unfruitful oft, and at her happiest throe
Forms, what she forms, alone;

O seeming sole to awake, thy sun-bathed head
Piercing the solemn cloud
Round thy still dreaming brother-world outspread!
O man, whom Earth, thy long-vexed mother, bare
Not without joy — so radiant, so endowed
(Such happy issue crowned her painful care) —
Be not too proud!

Oh, when most self-exalted, most alone,
Chief dreamer, own thy dream!
Thy brother-world stirs at thy feet unknown,
Who hath a monarch's hath no brother's part;
Yet doth thine inmost soul with yearning teem.
— Oh, what a spasm shakes the dreamer's heart!
*"I, too, but seem."* (1849)

## RESIGNATION

### TO FAUSTA

"To die be given us, or attain!
Fierce work it were, to do again."
So pilgrims, bound for Mecca, prayed
At burning noon; so warriors said,
Scarfed with the cross, who watched the miles
Of dust which wreathed their struggling files
Down Lydian mountains; so, when snows
Round Alpine summits, eddying, rose,
The Goth, bound Rome-wards; so the Hun,
Crouched on his saddle, while the sun
Went lurid down o'er flooded plains
Through which the groaning Danube strains
To the drear Euxine; — so pray all,
Whom labors, self-ordained, enthrall;
Because they to themselves propose
On this side the all-common close
A goal which, gained, may give repose.
So pray they; and to stand again
Where they stood once, to them were pain;
Pain to thread back and to renew
Past straits, and currents long steered through.

But milder natures, and more free —
Whom an unblamed serenity

---

*In Utrumque Paratus.* The title means *Prepared for Either*—that is, for either explanation of the origin of the world as given in the poem.

*Resignation.* See *To Fausta*, page 428.
3. **Mecca**, the holy city of the Mohammedans, in Arabia. 4. **warriors**, crusaders on their way across Lydia, in Asia Minor, to Palestine. 9. **Goth . . . Hun.** The Goths under Alaric, and the Huns under Attila, made attacks upon Rome in the fourth century. 13. **Euxine**, the Black Sea.

Hath freed from passions, and the state
Of struggle these necessitate;
Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
Hath made, or birth hath found, resigned —
These mourn not, that their goings pay
Obedience to the passing day.
These claim not every laughing Hour
For handmaid to their striding power;
Each in her turn, with torch upreared,
To await their march; and when appeared,
Through the cold gloom, with measured race,
To usher for a destined space
(Her own sweet errands all forgone)
The too imperious traveler on.
These, Fausta, ask not this; nor thou,
Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now!

We left, just ten years since, you say,
That wayside inn we left today.
Our jovial host, as forth we fare,
Shouts greeting from his easy chair.
High on a bank our leader stands,
Reviews and ranks his motley bands,
Makes clear our goal to every eye —
The valley's western boundary.
A gate swings to! our tide hath flowed
Already from the silent road.
The valley-pastures, one by one,
Are threaded, quiet in the sun;
And now beyond the rude stone bridge
Slopes gracious up the western ridge.
Its woody border, and the last
Of its dark upland farms, is past —
Cool farms, with open-lying stores,
Under their burnished sycamores;
All past! and through the trees we glide,
Emerging on the green hillside.
There climbing hangs, a far-seen sign,
Our wavering, many-colored line;
There winds, upstreaming slowly still
Over the summit of the hill.
And now, in front, behold outspread
Those upper regions we must tread!
Mild hollows, and clear heathy swells,
The cheerful silence of the fells.
Some two hours' march with serious air,
Through the deep noontide heats we fare;
The red-grouse, springing at our sound,
Skims, now and then, the shining ground;
No life, save his and ours, intrudes
Upon these breathless solitudes.
O joy! again the farms appear.
Cool shade is there, and rustic cheer;
There springs the brook will guide us down,
Bright comrade, to the noisy town.
Lingering, we follow down; we gain
The town, the highway, and the plain.
And many a mile of dusty way,
Parched and road-worn, we made that day;
But, Fausta, I remember well,
That as the balmy darkness fell
We bathed our hands with speechless glee,
That night, in the wide-glimmering sea.

Once more we tread this self-same road,
Fausta, which ten years since we trod;
Alone we tread it, you and I,
Ghosts of that boisterous company.
Here, where the brook shines, near its head,
In its clear, shallow, turf-fringed bed;
Here, whence the eye first sees, far down,
Capped with faint smoke, the noisy town;
Here sit we, and again unroll,
Though slowly, the familiar whole.
The solemn wastes of heathy hill
Sleep in the July sunshine still;
The self-same shadows now, as then,
Play through this grassy upland glen;
The loose dark stones on the green way
Lie strewn, it seems, where then they lay;
On this mild bank above the stream
(You crush them!), the blue gentians gleam.
Still this wild brook, the rushes cool,
The sailing foam, the shining pool!
These are not changed; and we, you say,
Are scarce more changed, in truth, than they.

The gypsies, whom we met below,
They, too, have long roamed to and fro;
They ramble, leaving, where they pass,
Their fragments on the cumbered grass.
And often to some kindly place
Chance guides the migratory race,
Where, though long wanderings intervene,
They recognize a former scene.
The dingy tents are pitched; the fires
Give to the wind their wavering spires;
In dark knots crouch round the wild flame
Their children, as when first they came;
They see their shackled beasts again
Move, browsing, up the gray-walled lane.
Signs are not wanting, which might raise
The ghost in them of former days —
Signs are not wanting, if they would;
Suggestions to disquietude.
For them, for all, time's busy touch,
While it mends little, troubles much.
Their joints grow stiffer — but the year
Runs his old round of dubious cheer;
Chilly they grow — yet winds in March,
Still, sharp as ever, freeze and parch;
They must live still — and yet, God knows,
Crowded and keen the country grows;

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38. **ask not this.** Milder natures than those mentioned in lines 1-21 do not ask that Time shall stand still while they accomplish their ambitions. 41. **wayside inn,** the inn at Wythburn, Cumberland. The walk described in lines 40-85 was probably taken in 1833, when the Arnolds were living at Grasmere. Under the leadership of Arnold's father (line 44) the group passed through Keswick (the "noisy town" of line 77) on the way to the sea.

It seems as if, in their decay,
The law grew stronger every day.
So might they reason, so compare,
Fausta, times past with times that are.
But no! — they rubbed through yesterday
In their hereditary way,
And they will rub through, if they can,
Tomorrow on the self-same plan,
Till death arrive to supersede,
For them, vicissitude and need.

The poet, to whose mighty heart
Heaven doth a quicker pulse impart,
Subdues that energy to scan
Not his own course, but that of man.
Though he move mountains, though his day
Be passed on the proud heights of sway,
Though he hath loosed a thousand chains,
Though he hath borne immortal pains,
Action and suffering though he know —
He hath not lived, if he lives so.
He sees, in some great-historied land,
A ruler of the people stand,
Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
Roll through the heaving multitude,
Exults — yet for no moment's space
Envies the all-regarded place.
Beautiful eyes meet his — and he
Bears to admire uncravingly;
They pass — he, mingled with the crowd,
Is in their far-off triumphs proud.
From some high station he looks down,
At sunset, on a populous town;
Surveys each happy group, which fleets,
Toil ended, through the shining streets,
Each with some errand of its own —
And does not say, "I am alone."
He sees the gentle stir of birth
When morning purifies the earth;
He leans upon a gate and sees
The pastures, and the quiet trees.
Low, woody hill, with gracious bound,
Folds the still valley almost round;
The cuckoo, loud on some high lawn,
Is answered from the depth of dawn;
In the hedge straggling to the stream,
Pale, dew-drenched, half-shut roses gleam;
But, where the farther side slopes down,
He sees the drowsy new-waked clown
In his white quaint-embroidered frock
Make, whistling, tow'rd his mist-wreathed flock —
Slowly, behind his heavy tread,
The wet, flowered grass heaves up its head.
Leaned on his gate, he gazes — tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years.
Before him he sees life unroll,
A placid and continuous whole —
That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace;
That life, whose dumb wish is not missed
If birth proceeds, if things subsist;
The life of plants, and stones, and rain,
The life he craves — if not in vain
Fate gave, what chance shall not control,
His sad lucidity of soul.

You listen — but that wandering smile,
Fausta, betrays you cold the while!
Your eyes pursue the bells of foam
Washed, eddying, from this bank, their home.
"Those gypsies," so your thoughts I scan,
"Are less, the poet more, than man.
They feel not, though they move and see;
Deeper the poet feels; but he
Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
Where Orpheus and where Homer are.
In the day's life, whose iron round
Hems us all in, he is not bound;
He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,
And flees the common life of men.
He escapes thence, but we abide —
Not deep the poet sees, but wide."

The world in which we live and move
Outlasts aversion, outlasts love,
Outlasts each effort, interest, hope,
Remorse, grief, joy — and were the scope
Of these affections wider made,
Man still would see, and see dismayed,
Beyond his passion's widest range,
Far regions of eternal change.
Nay, and since death, which wipes out man,
Finds him with many an unsolved plan,
With much unknown, and much untried,
Wonder not dead, and thirst not dried,
Still gazing on the ever full
Eternal mundane spectacle —
This world in which we draw our breath,
In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death.

Blame thou not, therefore, him who dares
Judge vain beforehand human cares;
Whose natural insight can discern
What through experience others learn;
Who needs not love and power, to know
Love transient, power an unreal show;
Who treads at ease life's uncheered ways —
Him blame not, Fausta, rather praise!
Rather thyself for some aim pray
Nobler than this, to fill the day;
Rather that heart, which burns in thee,
Ask, not to amuse, but to set free;
Be passionate hopes not ill resigned
For quiet, and a fearless mind.

---

181. **clown**, a country fellow.

208. **Orpheus**, a famous musician of Greek mythology.

And though fate grudge to thee and me
The poet's rapt security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from chance, have conquered fate.
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to men's business not too near,
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw homeward to the general life.
Like leaves by suns not yet uncurled;
To the wise, foolish; to the world,
Weak — yet not weak, I might reply,
Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
To whom each moment in its race,
Crowd as we will its neutral space,
Is but a quiet watershed
Whence, equally, the seas of life and death are fed.

Enough, we live! — and if a life,
With large results so little rife,
Though bearable, seem hardly worth
This pomp of worlds, this pain of birth;
Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread,
The solemn hills around us spread,
This stream which falls incessantly,
The strange-scrawled rocks, the lonely sky,
If I might lend their life a voice,
Seem to bear rather than rejoice.
And even could the intemperate prayer
Man iterates, while these forbear,
For movement, for an ampler sphere,
Pierce Fate's impenetrable ear;
Not milder is the general lot
Because our spirits have forgot,
In action's dizzying eddy whirled,
The something that infects the world. (1849)

## MEMORIAL VERSES

APRIL, 1850

Goethe in Weimar sleeps, and Greece,
Long since, saw Byron's struggle cease.
But one such death remained to come;
The last poetic voice is dumb —
We stand today by Wordsworth's tomb.

When Byron's eyes were shut in death,
We bowed our head and held our breath.
He taught us little; but our soul
Had *felt* him like the thunder's roll.
With shivering heart the strife we saw
Of passion with eternal law;
And yet with reverential awe
We watched the fount of fiery life
Which served for that Titanic strife.

When Goethe's death was told, we said:
Sunk, then, is Europe's sagest head.
Physician of the iron age,
Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
He took the suffering human race,
He read each wound, each weakness clear;
And struck his finger on the place,
And said: *Thou ailest here, and here!*
He looked on Europe's dying hour
Of fitful dream and feverish power;
His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
The turmoil of expiring life —
He said: *The end is everywhere,*
*Art still has truth, take refuge there!*
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror, and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.

And Wordsworth! — Ah, pale ghosts, rejoice!
For never has such soothing voice
Been to your shadowy world conveyed,
Since erst, at morn, some wandering shade
Heard the clear song of Orpheus come
Through Hades, and the mournful gloom.
Wordsworth has gone from us — and ye,
Ah, may ye feel his voice as we!
He too upon a wintry clime
Had fallen — on this iron time
Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us, as we lay at birth,
On the cool flowery lap of earth;
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sun-lit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth returned; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furled,
The freshness of the early world.

Ah! since dark days still bring to light
Man's prudence and man's fiery might,

---

246. **security**, freedom from care, due to his detachment from affairs of the world. 278. **something . . . world**, possibly, doubt and pessimism.

*Memorial Verses.* Goethe died in 1832 and was buried in Weimar, Germany. Byron died in 1824 while aiding the Greeks in their fight for independence. Wordsworth died in 1850. Arnold gave high place to all three poets; he was influenced especially by the poetry of Wordsworth.

14. **Titanic strife.** Byron was noted for his fiery, passionate nature, and the word *Titanic* is fittingly applied to him. The Titans were superhuman beings of great size who rebelled against the gods. 17. **iron age**, so called because of the terrible years of the French Revolution and the period following. To Goethe they seemed to portend the destruction of Europe. 29-33. **And he . . . happiness.** These lines are translated from Virgil's *Georgics*, 2, 490-492. 38. **Orpheus**, the famous musician of Greek mythology who descended to the lower world to rescue his wife Eurydice. He was allowed by Pluto, god of the underworld, to lead her to the upper world on condition that he should not look back. He broke the condition, however, and saw Eurydice vanish.

Time may restore us in his course
Goethe's sage mind and Byron's force;
But where will Europe's latter hour
Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
Others will teach us how to dare,
And against fear our breast to steel;
Others will strengthen us to bear —
But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly —
But who, like him, will put it by?

Keep fresh the grass upon his grave,
O Rotha, with thy living wave!
Sing him thy best! for few or none
Hears thy voice right, now he is gone. (1850)

## From EMPEDOCLES ON ETNA

### A DRAMATIC POEM

### *PERSONS*

Empedocles
Pausanias, *a Physician*
Callicles, *a young Harp-player*

*The Scene of the Poem is on Mount Etna; at first in the forest region, afterwards on the summit of the mountain.*

### From ACT I, SCENE II

*Noon. A Glen on the highest skirts of the woody region of Etna.*

EMPEDOCLES — PAUSANIAS

*Pausanias.* The noon is hot. When we have crossed the stream,
We shall have left the woody tract and come
Upon the open shoulder of the hill.
See how the giant spires of yellow bloom
Of the sun-loving gentian, in the heat,
Are shining on those naked slopes like flame!
Let us rest here; and now, Empedocles,
Pantheia's history!
[*A harp-note below is heard.*
*Empedocles.* Hark! what sound was that
Rose from below? If it were possible,
And we were not so far from human haunt,
I should have said that some one touched a harp.
Hark! there again!
*Pausanias.* 'Tis the boy Callicles,
The sweetest harp-player in Catana.
He is forever coming on these hills,
In summer, to all country-festivals,
With a gay reveling band; he breaks from them
Sometimes, and wanders far among the glens.
But heed him not, he will not mount to us;
I spoke with him this morning. Once more, therefore,
Instruct me of Pantheia's story, Master,
As I have prayed thee.
*Empedocles.* That? and to what end?
*Pausanias.* It is enough that all men speak of it.
But I will also say, that when the gods
Visit us as they do with sign and plague,
To know those spells of thine which stay their hand
Were to live free from terror.
*Empedocles.* Spells? Mistrust them!
Mind is the spell which governs earth and heaven.
Man has a mind with which to plan his safety;
Know that, and help thyself!
*Pausanias.* But thine own words?—
"The wit and counsel of man was never clear,
Troubles confound the little wit he has."
Mind is a light which the gods mock us with,
To lead those false who trust it.
[*The harp sounds again.*
*Empedocles.* Hist! once more!
Listen, Pausanias! — Aye, 'tis Callicles;
I know these notes among a thousand. Hark!

*Callicles*

(*Sings unseen, from below*).

The track winds down to the clear stream,
To cross the sparkling shallows; there
The cattle love to gather, on their way
To the high mountain-pastures, and to stay,
Till the rough cowherds drive them past,
Knee-deep in the cool ford; for 'tis the last
Of all the woody, high, well-watered dells
On Etna; and the beam
Of noon is broken there by chestnut-boughs
Down its steep verdant sides; the air
Is freshened by the leaping stream, which throws
Eternal showers of spray on the mossed roots
Of trees, and veins of turf, and long dark shoots
Of ivy-plants, and fragrant hanging bells

---

72. **Rotha**, a small stream near Grasmere, Westmoreland, where Wordsworth is buried.

*Empedocles on Etna.* Empedocles was a poet and a philosopher who lived in Sicily in the fifth century B.C. He was noted as a teacher of rhetoric and as a musician, and was reputed to be able to perform miracles. In the drama he is represented as an exile on Mount Etna, on the east coast of Sicily.

In Scene I Pausanias and Callicles discuss the present condition of their friend Empedocles, who is being carried on a litter up the mountain. It is arranged that Callicles is later to play on his harp, unseen, in an effort to cure the "fierce man-hating mood" of Empedocles. Cf. Browning's *Saul*, page 213.

8. **Pantheia**, a woman whom Empedocles is said to have brought to life after "thirty long days in a cold trance of death." Callicles says in Scene I that she "was subject to these trances from a girl."

13. **Catana**, a town at the foot of Mt. Etna.

Of hyacinths, and on late anemones,
That muffle its wet banks; but glade,
And stream, and sward, and chestnut-trees,
End here; Etna beyond, in the broad glare
Of the hot noon, without a shade,
Slope behind slope, up to the peak, lies bare;
The peak, round which the white clouds play.

In such a glen, on such a day,
On Pelion, on the grassy ground,
Chiron, the aged Centaur lay,
The young Achilles standing by.
The Centaur taught him to explore
The mountains; where the glens are dry
And the tired Centaurs come to rest,
And where the soaking springs abound
And the straight ashes grow for spears,
And where the hill-goats come to feed,
And the sea-eagles build their nest.
He showed him Phthia far away,
And said, "O boy, I taught this lore
To Peleus, in long distant years!"
He told him of the gods, the stars,
The tides — and then of mortal wars,
And of the life which heroes lead
Before they reach the Elysian place
And rest in the immortal mead;
And all the wisdom of his race.

*The music below ceases, and* EMPEDOCLES *speaks, accompanying himself in a solemn manner on his harp.*

The outspread world to span
A cord the gods first slung,
And then the soul of man
There, like a mirror, hung,
And bade the winds through space impel the gusty toy.

Hither and thither spins
The wind-borne, mirroring soul,
A thousand glimpses wins,
And never sees a whole;
Looks once, and drives elsewhere, and leaves its last employ.

The gods laugh in their sleeve
To watch man doubt and fear,
Who knows not what to believe
Since he sees nothing clear,
And dares stamp nothing false where he finds nothing sure.

Is this, Pausanias, so?
And can our souls not strive,
But with the winds must go,
And hurry where they drive?
Is fate indeed so strong, man's strength indeed so poor?

I will not judge. That man,
Howbeit, I judge as lost,
Whose mind allows a plan,
Which would degrade it most;
And he treats doubt the best who tries to see least ill.

Be not, then, fear's blind slave!
Thou art my friend; to thee,
All knowledge that I have,
All skill I wield, are free.
Ask not the latest news of the last miracle,

Ask not what days and nights
In trance Pantheia lay,
But ask how thou such sights
May'st see without dismay;
Ask what most helps when known, thou son of Anchitus!

What? hate, and awe, and shame
Fill thee to see our time;
Thou feelest thy soul's frame
Shaken and out of chime?
What? life and chance go hard with thee too, as with us;

Thy citizens, 'tis said,
Envy thee and oppress,
Thy goodness no men aid,
All strive to make it less;
Tyranny, pride, and lust fill Sicily's abodes;

Heaven is with earth at strife,
Signs make thy soul afraid,
The dead return to life,
Rivers are dried, winds stayed;
Scarce can one think in calm, so threatening are the gods;

And we feel, day and night,
The burden of ourselves —
Well, then, the wiser wight
In his own bosom delves,
And asks what ails him so, and gets what cure he can.

The sophist sneers: Fool, take
Thy pleasure, right or wrong!
The pious wail: Forsake
A world these sophists throng! —
Be neither saint nor sophist-led, but be a man!

---

58. **Pelion,** a mountain in Thessaly, the haunt of the Centaurs—fabled monsters, half man and half horse. The most famous of the Centaurs was Chiron, noted for his wisdom. He was the instructor of Achilles, the son of Peleus. Achilles was the famous Greek hero in the Trojan War. He was born at Phthia, in Thessaly. 74. **Elysian place,** the abode of the blessed after death.

129. **wight,** person.

These hundred doctors try
To preach thee to their school.
We have the truth! they cry;
And yet their oracle,
Trumpet it as they will, is but the same as thine.

Once read thy own breast right,
And thou hast done with fears;
Man gets no other light,
Search he a thousand years.
Sink in thyself! there ask what ails thee, at that shrine!

What makes thee struggle and rave?
Why are men ill at ease? —
'Tis that the lot they have
Fails their own will to please;
For man would make no murmuring, were his will obeyed.

And why is it, that still
Man with his lot thus fights? —
'Tis that he makes this *will*
The measure of his *rights*,
And believes Nature outraged if his will's gainsaid.

Couldst thou, Pausanias, learn
How deep a fault is this;
Couldst thou but once discern
Thou hast no *right* to bliss,
No title from the gods to welfare and repose;

Then thou wouldst look less mazed
Whene'er of bliss debarred,
Nor think the gods were crazed
When thy own lot went hard.
But we are all the same — the fools of our own woes!

For, from the first faint morn
Of life, the thirst for bliss
Deep in man's heart is born;
And, skeptic as he is,
He fails not to judge clear if this be quenched or no.

Nor is the thirst to blame.
Man errs not that he deems
His welfare his true aim;
He errs because he dreams
The world does but exist that welfare to bestow.

We mortals are no kings
For each of whom to sway
A new-made world up-springs,
Meant merely for his play;
No, we are strangers here; the world is from of old.

In vain our pent wills fret,
And would the world subdue.
Limits we did not set
Condition all we do;
Born into life we are, and life must be our mold.

Born into life! — man grows
Forth from his parents' stem,
And blends their bloods, as those
Of theirs are blent in them;
So each new man strikes root into a far foretime.

Born into life! — we bring
A bias with us here,
And, when here, each new thing
Affects us we come near;
To tunes we did not call our being must keep chime.

Born into life! — in vain,
Opinions, those or these,
Unaltered to retain
The obstinate mind decrees;
Experience, like a sea, soaks all-effacing in.

Born into life! — who lists
May what is false hold dear,
And for himself make mists
Through which to see less clear;
The world is what it is, for all our dust and din.

Born into life! — 'tis we,
And not the world, are new;
Our cry for bliss, our plea,
Others have urged it too —
Our wants have all been felt, our errors made before.

No eye could be too sound
To observe a world so vast,
No patience too profound
To sort what's here amassed;
How man may here best live no care too great to explore.

But we — as some rude guest
Would change, where'er he roam,
The manners there professed
To those he brings from home —
We mark not the world's course, but would have *it* take *ours*.

The world's course proves the terms
On which man wins content;
Reason the proof confirms —
We spurn it, and invent
A false course for the world, and for ourselves, false powers.

Riches we wish to get,
Yet remain spendthrifts still;
We would have health, and yet
Still use our bodies ill;
Bafflers of our own prayers, from youth to life's last scenes.

We would have inward peace,
Yet will not look within;
We would have misery cease,
Yet will not cease from sin;
We want all pleasant ends, but will use no harsh means;

We do not what we ought,
What we ought not, we do,
And lean upon the thought
That chance will bring us through;
But our own acts for good, or ill, are mightier powers.

Yet, even when man forsakes
All sin — is just, is pure,
Abandons all which makes
His welfare insecure —
Other existences there are, that clash with ours.

Like us, the lightning-fires
Love to have scope and play;
The stream, like us, desires
An unimpeded way;
Like us, the Libyan wind delights to roam at large.

Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings go aside
To give his virtues room;
Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge.

Nature, with equal mind,
Sees all her sons at play;
Sees man control the wind,
The wind sweep man away;
Allows the proudly-riding and the foundering bark.

And, lastly, though of ours
No weakness spoil our lot,
Though the non-human powers
Of Nature harm us not,
The ill deeds of other men make often *our* life dark.

What were the wise man's plan? —
Through this sharp, toil-set life,
To work as best he can,
And win what's won by strife. —
But we an easier way to cheat our pains have found.

Scratched by a fall, with moans
As children of weak age
Lend life to the dumb stones
Whereon to vent their rage,
And bend their little fists, and rate the senseless ground;

So, loath to suffer mute,
We, peopling the void air,
Make gods to whom to impute
The ills we ought to bear;
With God and Fate to rail at, suffering easily.

Yet grant — as sense long missed
Things that are now perceived,
And much may still exist
Which is not yet believed —
Grant that the world were full of gods we cannot see;

All things the world which fill
Of but one stuff are spun,
That we who rail are still,
With what we rail at, one;
One with the o'erlabored Power that through the breadth and length

Of earth, and air, and sea,
In men, and plants, and stones,
Hath toil perpetually,
And travails, pants, and moans;
Fain would do all things well, but sometimes fails in strength.

And patiently exact
This universal God
Alike to any act
Proceeds at any nod,
And quietly declaims the cursings of himself.

This is not what man hates,
Yet he can curse but this.
Harsh gods and hostile Fates
Are dreams! this only *is* —
Is everywhere; sustains the wise, the foolish elf.

Nor only, in the intent
To attach blame elsewhere,
Do we at will invent
Stern Powers who make their care
To embitter human life, malignant Deities;

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251. **Libyan,** from Libya, a part of northern Africa. 252-256. **Streams . . . barge.** Cf. *Matthew*, 5:44-46.— "But I say unto you, Love your enemies . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

276. **rate,** berate, scold. 306. **elf,** person.

But, next, we would reverse
The scheme ourselves have spun,
And what we made to curse
We now would lean upon,
And feign kind gods who perfect what man vainly tries.

Look, the world tempts our eye,
And we would know it all!
We map the starry sky,
We mine this earthen ball,
We measure the sea-tides, we number the sea-sands;

We scrutinize the dates
Of long-past human things,
The bounds of effaced states,
The lines of deceased kings;
We search out dead men's words, and works of dead men's hands;

We shut our eyes, and muse
How our own minds are made,
What springs of thought they use,
How rightened, how betrayed —
And spend our wit to name what most employ unnamed.

But still, as we proceed
The mass swells more and more
Of volumes yet to read,
Of secrets yet to explore.
Our hair grows gray, our eyes are dimmed, our heat is tamed;

We rest our faculties,
And thus address the gods:
"True science if there is,
It stays in your abodes!
Man's measures cannot mete the immeasurable All.

"You only can take in
The world's immense design.
Our desperate search was sin,
Which henceforth we resign,
Sure only that your mind sees all things which befall."

Fools! That in man's brief term
He cannot all things view,
Affords no ground to affirm
That there are gods who do;
Nor does being weary prove that he has where to rest.

Again. — Our youthful blood
Claims rapture as its right;
The world, a rolling flood
Of newness and delight,
Draws in the enamored gazer to its shining breast;

Pleasure, to our hot grasp,
Gives flowers, after flowers;
With passionate warmth we clasp
Hand after hand in ours;
Now do we soon perceive how fast our youth is spent.

At once our eyes grow clear!
We see, in blank dismay,
Year posting after year,
Sense after sense decay;
Our shivering heart is mined by secret discontent;

Yet still, in spite of truth,
In spite of hopes entombed,
That longing of our youth
Burns ever unconsumed,
Still hungrier for delight as delights grow more rare.

We pause; we hush our heart,
And thus address the gods:
"The world hath failed to impart
The joy our youth forebodes,
Failed to fill up the void which in our breasts we bear.

"Changeful till now, we still
Looked on to something new;
Let us, with changeless will,
Henceforth look on to you,
To find with you the joy we in vain here require!"

Fools! That so often here
Happiness mocked our prayer,
I think, might make us fear
A like event elsewhere;
Make us, not fly to dreams, but moderate desire.

And yet, for those who know
Themselves, who wisely take
Their way through life, and bow
To what they cannot break,
Why should I say that life need yield but *moderate* bliss?

Shall we, with temper spoiled,
Health sapped by living ill,
And judgment all embroiled
By sadness and self-will,
Shall *we* judge what for man is not true bliss or is?

Is it so small a thing
To have enjoyed the sun,
To have lived light in the spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done;

To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes —

That we must feign a bliss
Of doubtful future date,
And, while we dream on this,
Lose all our present state,
And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?

Not much, I know, you prize
What pleasures may be had,
Who look on life with eyes
Estranged, like mine, and sad;
And yet the village-churl feels the truth more than you,

Who's loath to leave this life
Which to him little yields —
His hard-tasked sunburnt wife,
His often-labored fields,
The boors with whom he talked, the country-spots he knew.

But thou, because thou hear'st
Men scoff at heaven and fate,
Because the gods thou fear'st
Fail to make blest thy state,
Tremblest, and wilt not dare to trust the joys there are!

I say: Fear not! Life still
Leaves human effort scope.
But, since life teems with ill,
Nurse no extravagant hope;
Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then despair!

*A long pause. At the end of it the notes of a harp below are again heard, and* Callicles *sings:*

Far, far from here,
The Adriatic breaks in a warm bay
Among the green Illyrian hills; and there
The sunshine in the happy glens is fair,
And by the sea, and in the brakes.
The grass is cool, the seaside air
Buoyant and fresh, the mountain flowers
More virginal and sweet than ours.
And there, they say, two bright and agéd snakes,
Who once were Cadmus and Harmonia,
Bask in the glens or on the warm sea-shore,
In breathless quiet, after all their ills;
Nor do they see their country, nor the place
Where the Sphinx lived among the frowning hills,
Nor the unhappy palace of their race,
Nor Thebes, nor the Ismenus, any more.

There those two live, far in the Illyrian brakes!
They had stayed long enough to see,
In Thebes, the billow of calamity
Over their own dear children rolled,
Curse upon curse, pang upon pang,
For years, they sitting helpless in their home,
A gray old man and woman; yet of old
The gods had to their marriage come,
And at the banquet all the Muses sang.

Therefore they did not end their days
In sight of blood; but were rapt, far away,
To where the west-wind plays,
And murmurs of the Adriatic come
To those untrodden mountain-lawns; and there
Placed safely in changed forms, the pair
Wholly forget their first sad life, and home,
And all that Theban woe, and stray
Forever through the glens, placid and dumb.

*Empedocles.* That was my harp-player again! — where is he?
Down by the stream?
*Pausanias.* Yes, Master, in the wood.
*Empedocles.* He ever loved the Theban story well!
But the day wears. Go now, Pausanias,
For I must be alone. Leave me one mule;
Take down with thee the rest to Catana.
And for young Callicles, thank him from me;
Tell him, I never failed to love his lyre —
But he must follow me no more tonight.
*Pausanias.* Thou wilt return tomorrow to the city?
*Empedocles.* Either tomorrow or some other day,
In the sure revolutions of the world,
Good friend, I shall revisit Catana.
I have seen many cities in my time,
Till mine eyes ache with the long spectacle,
And I shall doubtless see them all again;
Thou know'st me for a wanderer from of old.
Meanwhile, stay me not now. Farewell, Pausanias!
[*He departs on his way up the mountain.*

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429. **Illyrian hills,** mountains in ancient Illyria, a region north of Greece. 436. **Cadmus and Harmonia.** Cadmus was the legendary founder of Thebes, in Greece. He married Harmonia, the daughter of Mars and Venus; but because Cadmus had previously slain a crested snake sacred to Mars, a fatal vengeance hung over the family. The children of Cadmus perished by violence, and Cadmus and Harmonia left Thebes for Illyria. Their misfortunes weighed so heavily upon their minds that the gods granted their wish to be changed into serpents.

440. **Sphinx,** the monster—half woman and half lion—sent to Thebes by Juno, mother of Mars, to punish the family of Cadmus. The monster propounded a riddle to all passers-by and killed those who could not solve it. 442. **Ismenus,** a small river near Thebes.

*Pausanias* (*alone*). I dare not urge him further — he must go;
But he is strangely wrought! — I will speed back
And bring Peisianax to him from the city;
His counsel could once soothe him. But, Apollo!
How his brow lightened as the music rose!
Callicles must wait here, and play to him;
I saw him through the chestnuts far below,
Just since, down at the stream. — Ho! Callicles!
[*He descends, calling.*

## From ACT II

*Callicles* (*from below*)

Through the black, rushing smoke-bursts,
Thick breaks the red flame;
All Etna heaves fiercely
Her forest-clothed frame.

Not here, O Apollo!
Are haunts meet for thee.
But, where Helicon breaks down
In cliff to the sea,

Where the moon-silvered inlets
Send far their light voice
Up the still vale of Thisbe,
O speed, and rejoice!

On the sward at the cliff-top
Lie strewn the white flocks,
On the cliff-side the pigeons
Roost deep in the rocks.

In the moonlight the shepherds,
Soft lulled by the rills,
Lie wrapped in their blankets,
Asleep on the hills.

—What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom?
What garments out-glistening
The gold-flowered broom?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime? —

'Tis Apollo comes leading
His choir, the Nine.
— The leader is fairest,
But all are divine.

They are lost in the hollows!
They stream up again!
What seeks on this mountain
The glorified train? —

They bathe on this mountain,
In the spring by their road;
Then on to Olympus,
Their endless abode.

—Whose praise do they mention?
Of what is it told? —
What will be forever;
What was from of old.

First hymn they the Father
Of all things; and then,
The rest of immortals,
The action of men.

The day in his hotness,
The strife with the palm;
The night in her silence,
The stars in their calm. (1852)

## From SWITZERLAND

### 4. ISOLATION. TO MARGUERITE

We were apart; yet, day by day,
I bade my heart more constant be.
I bade it keep the world away,
And grow a home for only thee;
Nor feared but thy love likewise grew,
Like mine, each day, more tried, more true.

The fault was grave! I might have known,
What far too soon, alas! I learned —
The heart can bind itself alone,
And faith may oft be unreturned.
Self-swayed our feelings ebb and swell —
Thou lov'st no more; — Farewell! Farewell!

Farewell! — and thou, thou lonely heart,
Which never yet without remorse
Even for a moment didst depart
From thy remote and spheréd course

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481. **Peisianax**, a friend of Empedocles. 482. **Apollo**, god of music and poetry.

*Act II*. The action takes place in the evening on the summit of the mountain. Empedocles is ready to hurl himself into the smoking volcano. Suddenly he hears Callicles singing below. He is restrained for a short time, but finally plunges into the crater just before Callicles sings this song.

7. **Helicon**, a mountain in Greece, sacred to Apollo. 11. **Thisbe**, a town situated in a valley in Bœotia, Greece.

30. **the Nine**, the nine Muses. See note on Clough's *In the Depths*, page 404. 38. **the spring**, a spring flowing from Mount Helicon, sacred to the Muses. 39. **Olympus**, a mountain in Greece, the abode of the gods. 50. **the palm**, the reward of victory.

*Switzerland*. This title is given to a group of six love poems. The three omitted are entitled *Meeting*, *Parting*, and *A Farewell*. The three included here were originally published as independent poems. With *Isolation*, cf. Browning's *Two in the Campagna*, page 231.

To haunt the place where passions reign —
Back to thy solitude again!

Back! with the conscious thrill of shame
Which Luna felt, that summer-night,
Flash through her pure immortal frame,
When she forsook the starry height
To hang over Endymion's sleep
Upon the pine-grown Latmian steep.

Yet she, chaste queen, had never proved
How vain a thing is mortal love,
Wandering in heaven, far removed.
But thou hast long had place to prove
This truth — to prove, and make thine own:
"Thou hast been, shalt be, art, alone."

Or, if not quite alone, yet they
Which touch thee are unmating things —
Ocean and clouds and night and day;
Lorn autumns and triumphant springs;
And life, and others' joy and pain,
And love, if love, of happier men.

Of happier men — for they, at least,
Have *dreamed* two human hearts might blend
In one, and were through faith released
From isolation without end
Prolonged; nor knew, although not less
Alone than thou, their loneliness.
(1855)

### 5. TO MARGUERITE — CONTINUED

Yes! in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone.*
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour —

Oh! then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent;
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent!
Now round us spreads the watery plain —
Oh, might our marges meet again!

Who ordered, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?
Who renders vain their deep desire? —
A god, a god their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea. (1852)

### 6. ABSENCE

In this fair stranger's eyes of gray
Thine eyes, my love! I see.
I shiver; for the passing day
Had borne me far from thee.

This is the curse of life! that not
A nobler, calmer train
Of wiser thoughts and feelings blot
Our passions from our brain;

But each day brings its petty dust
Our soon-choked souls to fill,
And we forget because we must
And not because we will.

I struggle toward the light; and ye,
Once-longed-for storms of love!
If with the light ye cannot be,
I bear that ye remove.

I struggle toward the light — but oh,
While yet the night is chill,
Upon time's barren, stormy flow,
Stay with me, Marguerite, still!
(1852)

## DESPONDENCY

The thoughts that rain their steady glow
Like stars on life's cold sea,
Which others know, or say they know —
They never shone for me.

Thoughts light, like gleams, my spirit's sky,
But they will not remain.
They light me once, they hurry by;
And never come again. (1852)

## SELF-DECEPTION

Say, what blinds us, that we claim the glory
Of possessing powers not our share?
— Since man woke on earth, he knows his story,
But, before we woke on earth, we were.

Long, long since, undowered yet, our spirit
Roamed, ere birth, the treasuries of God;
Saw the gifts, the powers it might inherit,
Asked an outfit for its earthly road.

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20. **Luna**, Diana, the goddess of the moon and the goddess of chastity. She fell in love with Endymion, the shepherd boy whom she found sleeping on Mt. Latmus, in Asia Minor.

Then, as now, this tremulous, eager being
Strained and longed and grasped each gift it saw;
Then, as now, a Power beyond our seeing
Staved us back, and gave our choice the law.

Ah, whose hand that day through heaven guided
Man's new spirit, since it was not we?
Ah, who swayed our choice, and who decided
What our gifts, and what our wants should be?

For, alas! he left us each retaining
Shreds of gifts which he refused in full.
Still these waste us with their hopeless straining,
Still the attempt to use them proves them null.

And on earth we wander, groping, reeling;
Powers stir in us, stir and disappear.
Ah! and he, who placed our master-feeling,
Failed to place that master-feeling clear.

We but dream we have our wished-for powers,
Ends we seek we never shall attain.
Ah! *some* power exists there, which is ours?
*Some* end is there, we indeed may gain?
(1852)

## TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

### I. TRISTRAM

*Tristram*

Is she not come? The messenger was sure.
Prop me upon the pillows once again —
Raise me, my page! this cannot long endure.
— Christ, what a night! how the sleet whips the pane!
What lights will those out to the northward be?

*The Page*

The lanterns of the fishing-boats at sea.

*Tristram*

Soft — who is that stands by the dying fire?

*The Page*

Iseult.

*Tristram*

Ah! not the Iseult I desire.

. . . . .

What knight is this so weak and pale,
Though the locks are yet brown on his noble head,
Propped on pillows in his bed,
Gazing seaward for the light
Of some ship that fights the gale
On this wild December night?
Over the sick man's feet is spread
A dark green forest-dress;
A gold harp leans against the bed,
Ruddy in the fire's light.
I know him by his harp of gold,
Famous in Arthur's court of old;
I know him by his forest-dress —
The peerless hunter, harper, knight,
Tristram of Lyoness.

What lady is this, whose silk attire
Gleams so rich in the light of the fire?
The ringlets on her shoulders lying
In their flitting luster vying
With the clasp of burnished gold
Which her heavy robe doth hold.
Her looks are mild, her fingers slight
As the driven snow are white;
But her cheeks are sunk and pale.
Is it that the bleak sea-gale
Beating from the Atlantic sea
On this coast of Brittany,
Nips too keenly the sweet flower?
Is it that a deep fatigue
Hath come on her, a chilly fear,
Passing all her youthful hour
Spinning with her maidens here,
Listlessly through the window-bars
Gazing seawards many a league,
From her lonely shore-built tower,
While the knights are at the wars?
Or, perhaps, has her young heart
Felt already some deeper smart,
Of those that in secret the heart-strings rive,
Leaving her sunk and pale, though fair?
Who is this snowdrop by the sea? —
I know her by her mildness rare,
Her snow-white hands, her golden hair;
I know her by her rich silk dress,
And her fragile loveliness —

---

12. **Staved us back,** held us back as with a staff.

*Tristram and Iseult.* Tristram was a famous hero of Celtic legend. His home was in Lyonesse, a region which, according to tradition, sank beneath the sea, its position thereafter being marked by islands off the point of Cornwall. Tristram was sent to Ireland by his uncle, King Mark of Cornwall, to bring back Iseult, the King's bride, to the castle of Tintagel. On the return voyage Tristram and Iseult both drank of a potion that made them permanent lovers. Forced by his uncle to leave Cornwall, Tristram went to Brittany and married Iseult of the White Hands. Afterwards he became attached to Arthur's Court as one of the Knights of the Round Table. The story of Tristram is found in Malory's *Morte Darthur*, Books 10-12. Tennyson treated the theme in *The Last Tournament*, Swinburne in *Tristram of Lyonesse* (page 707), and Edwin Arlington Robinson in *Tristram*. In Arnold's poem Tristram is lying ill in Brittany waiting for an answer to the message he has sent to Iseult of Ireland asking her to come to him. The story is told partly in dialogue and partly in narrative.

The sweetest Christian soul alive,
Iseult of Brittany.

Iseult of Brittany? — but where
Is that other Iseult fair,
That proud, first Iseult, Cornwall's queen?
She, whom Tristram's ship of yore
From Ireland to Cornwall bore,
To Tyntagel, to the side
Of King Marc, to be his bride?
She who, as they voyaged, quaffed
With Tristram that spiced magic draft,
Which since then forever rolls
Through their blood, and binds their souls,
Working love, but working teen? —
There were two Iseults who did sway
Each her hour of Tristram's day;
But one possessed his waning time,
The other his resplendent prime.
Behold her here, the patient flower,
Who possessed his darker hour!
Iseult of the Snow-White Hand
Watches pale by Tristram's bed.
She is here who had his gloom,
Where art thou who hadst his bloom?
One such kiss as those of yore
Might thy dying knight restore!
Does the love-draft work no more?
Art thou cold, or false, or dead,
Iseult of Ireland?

· · · · ·

Loud howls the wind, sharp patters the rain,
And the knight sinks back on his pillows again.
He is weak with fever and pain,
And his spirit is not clear.
Hark! he mutters in his sleep,
As he wanders far from here,
Changes place and time of year,
And his closéd eye doth sweep
O'er some fair unwintry sea,
Not this fierce Atlantic deep,
While he mutters brokenly:

*Tristram*

The calm sea shines, loose hang the vessel's sails;
Before us are the sweet green fields of Wales,
And overhead the cloudless sky of May. —
"*Ah, would I were in those green fields at play,*
*Not pent on shipboard this delicious day!*
*Tristram, I pray thee, of thy courtesy,*
*Reach me my golden phial stands by thee,*
*But pledge me in it first for courtesy.* —"
Ha! dost thou start? are thy lips blanched like mine?
Child, 'tis no true draft this,' tis poisoned wine!
Iseult! . . .

· · · · ·

Ah, sweet angels, let him dream!
Keep his eyelids! let him seem
Not this fever-wasted wight
Thinned and paled before his time,
But the brilliant youthful knight
In the glory of his prime,
Sitting in the gilded barge,
At thy side, thou lovely charge,
Bending gaily o'er thy hand,
Iseult of Ireland!
And she too, that princess fair,
If her bloom be now less rare,
Let her have her youth again —
Let her be as she was then!
Let her have her proud dark eyes,
And her petulant quick replies —
Let her sweep her dazzling hand
With its gesture of command,
And shake back her raven hair
With the old imperious air!
As of old, so let her be,
That first Iseult, princess bright,
Chatting with her youthful knight
As he steers her o'er the sea,
Quitting at her father's will
The green isle where she was bred,
And her bower in Ireland,
For the surge-beat Cornish strand;
Where the prince whom she must wed
Dwells on loud Tyntagel's hill,
High above the sounding sea.
And that potion rare her mother
Gave her, that her future lord,
Gave her, that King Marc and she,
Might drink it on their marriage-day,
And forever love each other —
Let her, as she sits on board,
Ah, sweet saints, unwittingly!
See it shine, and take it up,
And to Tristram laughing say:
"Sir Tristram, of thy courtesy,
Pledge me in my golden cup!"
Let them drink it — let their hands
Tremble, and their cheeks be flame,
As they feel the fatal bands
Of a love they dare not name,
With a wild delicious pain,
Twine about their hearts again!
Let the early summer be
Once more round them, and the sea
Blue, and o'er its mirror kind
Let the breath of the May-wind,
Wandering through their drooping sails,
Die on the green fields of Wales!

---

67. **teen**, grief.

Let a dream like this restore
What his eye must see no more!

*Tristram*

Chill blows the wind, the pleasance-walks are drear —
Madcap, what jest was this, to meet me here?
Were feet like those made for so wild a way?
The southern winter-parlor, by my fay,
Had been the likeliest trysting-place today!
"*Tristram! — nay, nay — thou must not take my hand! —*
*Tristram! — sweet love! — we are betrayed — out-planned.*
*Fly — save thyself — save me! — I dare not stay.*" —
One last kiss first! — "*'Tis vain — to horse — away!*"

. . . . .

Ah! sweet saints, his dream doth move
Faster surely than it should,
From the fever in his blood!
All the springtime of his love
Is already gone and past,
And instead thereof is seen
Its winter, which endureth still —
Tyntagel on its surge-beat hill,
The pleasaunce-walks, the weeping queen,
The flying leaves, the straining blast,
And that long, wild kiss — their last.
And this rough December-night,
And his burning fever-pain,
Mingle with his hurrying dream,
Till they rule it, till he seem
The pressed fugitive again,
The love-desperate banished knight
With a fire in his brain
Flying o'er the stormy main.
—Whither does he wander now?
Haply in his dreams the wind
Wafts him here, and lets him find
The lovely orphan child again
In her castle by the coast;
The youngest, fairest chatelaine
Whom this realm of France can boast,
Our snowdrop by the Atlantic sea,
Iseult of Brittany.
And — for through the haggard air,
The stained arms, the matted hair
Of that stranger-knight ill-starred,
There gleamed something, which recalled
The Tristram who in better days
Was Launcelot's guest at Joyous Gard —
Welcomed here, and here installed,
Tended of his fever here,
Haply he seems again to move
His young guardian's heart with love;
In his exiled loneliness,
In his stately, deep distress,
Without a word, without a tear.
— Ah! 'tis well he should retrace
His tranquil life in this lone place;
His gentle bearing at the side
Of his timid youthful bride;
His long rambles by the shore
On winter-evenings, when the roar
Of the near waves came, sadly grand,
Through the dark, up the drowned sand,
Or his endless reveries
In the woods, where the gleams play
On the grass under the trees,
Passing the long summer's day
Idle as a mossy stone
In the forest-depths alone,
The chase neglected, and his hound
Couched beside him on the ground.
— Ah! what trouble's on his brow?
Hither let him wander now;
Hither, to the quiet hours
Passed among these heaths of ours
By the gray Atlantic sea;
Hours, if not of ecstasy,
From violent anguish surely free!

*Tristram*

All red with blood the whirling river flows,
The wide plain rings, the dazed air throbs with blows.
Upon us are the chivalry of Rome —
Their spears are down, their steeds are bathed in foam.
"Up, Tristram, up," men cry, "thou moonstruck knight!
What foul fiend rides thee? On into the fight!"
— Above the din her voice is in my ears;
I see her form glide through the crossing spears. —
Iseult! . . .

. . . . .

Ah! he wanders forth again;
We cannot keep him; now, as then,
There's a secret in his breast
Which will never let him rest.
These musing fits in the green wood
They cloud the brain, they dull the blood!
— His sword is sharp, his horse is good;
Beyond the mountains will he see
The famous towns of Italy,

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161. **pleasance-walks**, the walks in the pleasance, an inclosure with fountains, flower gardens, etc. 164. **fay**, faith. 194. **chatelaine**, lady of a castle. 203. **Launcelot.** See Tennyson's *Lancelot and Elaine*, page 120, and Critical Notes. **Joyous Gard**, Launcelot's home, reputed to have been near Berwick, in northern England.

236. **chivalry of Rome.** Early tradition states that King Arthur and his knights conquered Scandinavia, Gaul, and Rome. 238. **moonstruck.** The moon was long thought to cause madness.

And label with the blessed sign
The heathen Saxons on the Rhine.
At Arthur's side he fights once more
With the Roman emperor.
There's many a gay knight where he goes
Will help him to forget his care;
The march, the leaguer, heaven's blithe air,
The neighing steeds, the ringing blows —
Sick pining comes not where these are.
Ah! what boots it that the jest
Lightens every other brow,
What, that every other breast
Dances as the trumpets blow,
If one's own heart beats not light
On the waves of the tossed fight,
If oneself cannot get free
From the clog of misery?
Thy lovely youthful wife grows pale
Watching by the salt sea-tide
With her children at her side
For the gleam of thy white sail.
Home, Tristram, to thy halls again!
To our lonely sea complain,
To our forests tell thy pain!

*Tristram*

All round the forest sweeps off, black in shade,
But it is moonlight in the open glade;
And in the bottom of the glade shine clear
The forest-chapel and the fountain near.
— I think I have a fever in my blood;
Come, let me leave the shadow of this wood,
Ride down, and bathe my hot brow in the flood.
— Mild shines the cold spring in the moon's clear light;
God! 'tis *her* face plays in the waters bright.
"Fair love," she says, "canst thou forget so soon,
At this soft hour, under this sweet moon?" —
Iseult! . . .

. . . . .

Ah, poor soul! if this be so,
Only death can balm thy woe.
The solitudes of the green wood
Had no medicine for thy mood;
The rushing battle cleared thy blood
As little as did solitude.
— Ah! his eyelids slowly break
Their hot seals, and let him wake;
What new change shall we now see?
A happier? Worse it cannot be.

*Tristram*

Is my page here? Come, turn me to the fire!
Upon the window-panes the moon shines bright;
The wind is down — but she'll not come tonight.
Ah no! she is asleep in Cornwall now,
Far hence; her dreams are fair — smooth is her brow.
Of me she recks not, nor my vain desire.
— I have had dreams, I have had dreams, my page,
Would take a score years from a strong man's age;
And with a blood like mine, will leave, I fear,
Scant leisure for a second messenger.
— My princess, art thou there? Sweet, do not wait!
To bed, and sleep! my fever is gone by;
Tonight my page shall keep me company.
Where do the children sleep? kiss them for me!
Poor child, thou art almost as pale as I;
This comes of nursing long and watching late.
To bed — good night!

. . . . .

She left the gleam-lit fireplace,
She came to the bedside;
She took his hands in hers — her tears
Down on his wasted fingers rained.
She raised her eyes upon his face —
Not with a look of wounded pride,
A look as if the heart complained —
Her look was like a sad embrace;
The gaze of one who can divine
A grief, and sympathize.
Sweet flower! thy children's eyes
Are not more innocent than thine.
But they sleep in sheltered rest,
Like helpless birds in the warm nest,
On the castle's southern side;
Where feebly comes the mournful roar
Of buffeting wind and surging tide
Through many a room and corridor.
— Full on their window the moon's ray
Makes their chamber as bright as day.
It shines upon the blank white walls,
And on the snowy pillow falls,
And on two angel-heads doth play
Turned to each other — the eyes closed,
The lashes on the cheeks reposed.
Round each sweet brow the cap close-set
Hardly lets peep the golden hair;
Through the soft-opened lips the air
Scarcely moves the coverlet.
One little wandering arm is thrown
At random on the counterpane,
And often the fingers close in haste
As if their baby-owner chased
The butterflies again.
This stir they have, and this alone;

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258. leaguer, siege

But else they are so still!
— Ah, tired madcaps! you lie still;
But were you at the window now,
To look forth on the fairy sight
Of your illumined haunts by night,
To see the park-glades where you play
Far lovelier than they are by day,
To see the sparkle on the eaves,
And upon every giant-bough
Of those old oaks, whose wet red leaves
Are jeweled with bright drops of rain —
How would your voices run again!
And far beyond the sparkling trees
Of the castle-park one sees
The bare heaths spreading, clear as day,
Moor behind moor, far, far away,
Into the heart of Brittany.
And here and there, locked by the land,
Long inlets of smooth glittering sea,
And many a stretch of watery sand
All shining in the white moonbeams —
But you see fairer in your dreams!
What voices are these on the clear night-air?
What lights in the court — what steps on the stair?

## II. ISEULT OF IRELAND

*Tristram*

Raise the light, my page! that I may see her. —
Thou art come at last, then, haughty Queen!
Long I've waited, long I've fought my fever;
Late thou comest, cruel thou hast been.

*Iseult*

Blame me not, poor sufferer! that I tarried;
Bound I was, I could not break the band.
Chide not with the past, but feel the present!
I am here — we meet — I hold thy hand.

*Tristram*

Thou art come, indeed — thou hast rejoined me;
Thou hast dared it — but too late to save.
Fear not now that men should tax thine honor!
I am dying; build (thou may'st) my grave!

*Iseult*

Tristram, ah, for love of Heaven, speak kindly!
What, I hear these bitter words from thee?
Sick with grief I am, and faint with travel —
Take my hand — dear Tristram, look on me!

*Tristram*

I forgot, thou comest from thy voyage —
Yes, the spray is on thy cloak and hair.
But thy dark eyes are not dimmed, proud Iseult!
And thy beauty never was more fair.

*Iseult*

Ah, harsh flatterer! let alone my beauty!
I, like thee, have left my youth afar.
Take my hand, and touch these wasted fingers —
See my cheek and lips, how white they are!

*Tristram*

Thou art paler — but thy sweet charm, Iseult!
Would not fade with the dull years away.
Ah, how fair thou standest in the moonlight!
I forgive thee, Iseult! — thou wilt stay?

*Iseult*

Fear me not, I will be always with thee;
I will watch thee, tend thee, soothe thy pain;
Sing thee tales of true, long-parted lovers,
Joined at evening of their days again.

*Tristram*

No, thou shalt not speak! I should be finding
Something altered in thy courtly tone.
Sit — sit by me! I will think, we've lived so
In the greenwood, all our lives, alone.

*Iseult*

Altered, Tristram? Not in courts, believe me;
Love like mine is altered in the breast.
Courtly life is light and cannot reach it —
Ah! it lives, because so deep-suppressed!

What, thou think'st men speak in courtly chambers
Words by which the wretched are consoled?
What, thou think'st this aching brow was cooler,
Circled, Tristram, by a band of gold?

Royal state with Marc, my deep-wronged husband —
That was bliss to make my sorrows flee!
Silken courtiers whispering honeyed nothings —
Those were friends to make me false to thee!

Ah, on which, if both our lots were balanced,
Was indeed the heaviest burden thrown —

Thee, a pining exile in thy forest,
Me, a smiling queen upon my throne?

Vain and strange debate, where both have suffered,
Both have passed a youth consumed and sad,
Both have brought their anxious day to evening,
And have now short space for being glad!

Joined we are henceforth; nor will thy people,
Nor thy younger Iseult take it ill,
That a former rival shares her office,
When she sees her humbled, pale, and still.

I, a faded watcher by thy pillow,
I, a statue on thy chapel-floor,
Poured in prayer before the Virgin-Mother,
Rouse no anger, make no rivals more.

She will cry: "Is this the foe I dreaded?
This his idol? this that royal bride?
Ah, an hour of health would purge his eyesight!
Stay, pale queen! forever by my side."

Hush, no words! that smile, I see, forgives me.
I am now thy nurse, I bid thee sleep.
Close thine eyes — this flooding moonlight blinds them! —
Nay, all's well again! thou must not weep.

*Tristram*

I am happy! yet I feel there's something
Swells my heart, and takes my breath away.
Through a mist I see thee; near — come nearer!
Bend — bend down! — I yet have much to say.

*Iseult*

Heaven! his head sinks back upon the pillow —
Tristram! Tristram! let thy heart not fail!
Call on God and on the holy angels!
What, love, courage! — Christ! he is so pale.

*Tristram*

Hush, 'tis vain, I feel my end approaching!
This is what my mother said should be,
When the fierce pains took her in the forest,
The deep drafts of death, in bearing me.

"Son," she said, "thy name shall be of sorrow;
Tristram art thou called for my death's sake."
So she said, and died in the drear forest.
Grief since then his home with me doth make.

I am dying. — Start not, nor look wildly!
Me, thy living friend, thou canst not save.
But, since living we were ununited,
Go not far, O Iseult! from my grave.

Close mine eyes, then seek the princess Iseult;
Speak her fair, she is of royal blood!
Say, I willed so, that thou stay beside me —
She will grant it; she is kind and good.

Now to sail the seas of death I leave thee —
One last kiss upon the living shore!

*Iseult*

Tristram! — Tristram! — stay — receive me with thee!
Iseult leaves thee, Tristram! never more.

. . . . .

You see them clear — the moon shines bright.
Slow, slow and softly, where she stood,
She sinks upon the ground; — her hood
Had fallen back; her arms outspread
Still hold her lover's hand; her head
Is bowed, half-buried, on the bed.
O'er the blanched sheet her raven hair
Lies in disordered streams; and there,
Strung like white stars, the pearls still are,
And the golden bracelets, heavy and rare,
Flash on her white arms still —
The very same which yesternight
Flashed in the silver sconces' light,
When the feast was gay and the laughter loud
In Tyntagel's palace proud.
But then they decked a restless ghost
With hot-flushed cheeks and brilliant eyes,
And quivering lips on which the tide
Of courtly speech abruptly died,
And a glance which over the crowded floor,
The dancers, and the festive host,
Flew ever to the door.
That the knights eyed her in surprise,
And the dames whispered scoffingly:
"Her moods, good lack, they pass like showers!
But yesternight and she would be
As pale and still as withered flowers,
And now tonight she laughs and speaks
And has a color in her cheeks;
Christ keep us from such fantasy!" —

Yes, now the longing is o'erpast,
Which, dogged by fear and fought by shame,

---

85. **name . . . of sorrow.** The name *Tristram* is from the Latin word *tristis*, meaning *sorrow*.

113. **sconce,** a bracket for holding a light. 130. **fantasy,** queer behavior.

Shook her weak bosom day and night,
Consumed her beauty like a flame,
And dimmed it like the desert-blast.
And though the bedclothes hide her face,
Yet were it lifted to the light,
The sweet expression of her brow
Would charm the gazer, till his thought
Erased the ravages of time,
Filled up the hollow cheek, and brought
A freshness back as of her prime —
So healing is her quiet now.
So perfectly the lines express
A tranquil, settled loveliness,
Her younger rival's purest grace.

The air of the December-night
Steals coldly around the chamber bright,
Where those lifeless lovers be;
Swinging with it, in the light
Flaps the ghostlike tapestry.
And on the arras wrought you see
A stately huntsman, clad in green,
And round him a fresh forest-scene.
On that clear forest-knoll he stays,
With his pack round him, and delays.
He stares and stares, with troubled face,
At this huge, gleam-lit fireplace,
At that bright, iron-figured door,
And those blown rushes on the floor.
He gazes down into the room
With heated cheeks and flurried air,
And to himself he seems to say:
*"What place is this, and who are they?*
*Who is that kneeling lady fair?*
*And on his pillows that pale knight*
*Who seems of marble on a tomb?*
*How comes it here, this chamber bright,*
*Through whose mullioned windows clear*
*The castle-court all wet with rain,*
*The drawbridge and the moat appear,*
*And then the beach, and, marked with spray,*
*The sunken reefs, and far away*
*The unquiet bright Atlantic plain?*
*—What, has some glamour made me sleep,*
*And sent me with my dogs to sweep,*
*By night, with boisterous bugle-peal,*
*Through some old, seaside, knightly hall,*
*Not in the free greenwood at all?*
*That knight's asleep, and at her prayer*
*That lady by the bed doth kneel —*
*Then hush, thou boisterous bugle-peal!"*
— The wild boar rustles in his lair;
The fierce hounds snuff the tainted air;
But lord and hounds keep rooted there.

Cheer, cheer thy dogs into the brake,
O hunter! and without a fear
Thy golden-tasseled bugle blow,
And through the glades thy pastime take —
For thou wilt rouse no sleepers here!
For these thou seest are unmoved;
Cold, cold as those who lived and loved
A thousand years ago.

## III. ISEULT OF BRITTANY

A year had flown, and o'er the sea away,
In Cornwall, Tristram and Queen Iseult lay;
In King Marc's chapel, in Tyntagel old —
There in a ship they bore those lovers cold.

The young surviving Iseult, one bright day,
Had wandered forth. Her children were at play
In a green circular hollow in the heath
Which borders the sea-shore — a country path
Creeps over it from the tilled fields behind.
The hollow's grassy banks are soft-inclined,
And to one standing on them, far and near
The lone unbroken view spreads bright and clear
Over the waste. This cirque of open ground
Is light and green; the heather, which all round
Creeps thickly, grows not here; but the pale grass
Is strewn with rocks, and many a shivered mass
Of veined white-gleaming quartz, and here and there
Dotted with holly-trees and juniper.
In the smooth center of the opening stood
Three hollies side by side, and made a screen,
Warm with the winter-sun, of burnished green
With scarlet berries gemmed, the fell-fare's food.
Under the glittering hollies Iseult stands,
Watching her children play; their little hands
Are busy gathering spars of quartz, and streams
Of stagshorn for their hats; anon, with screams
Of mad delight they drop their spoils, and bound
Among the holly-clumps and broken ground,
Racing full speed, and startling in their rush
The fell-fares and the speckled missel-thrush
Out of their glossy coverts; — but when now
Their cheeks were flushed, and over each hot brow,

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169. **mullioned windows**, windows with panes of glass divided by upright stone bars.

22. **fell-fare**, field-fare, a kind of thrush. 25. **spars of quartz**, pieces of quartz crystal. 26. **stagshorn**, a kind of moss. 30. **missel-thrush**, a large European thrush that feeds on mistletoe berries.

Under the feathered hats of the sweet pair,
In blinding masses showered the golden hair—
Then Iseult called them to her, and the three
Clustered under the holly-screen, and she
Told them an old-world Breton history.

Warm in their mantles wrapped the three stood there,
Under the hollies, in the clear still air—
Mantles with those rich furs deep glistering
Which Venice ships do from swart Egypt bring.
Long they stayed still — then, pacing at their ease,
Moved up and down under the glossy trees.
But still, as they pursued their warm dry road,
From Iseult's lips the unbroken story flowed,
And still the children listened, their blue eyes
Fixed on their mother's face in wide surprise;
Nor did their looks stray once to the seaside,
Nor to the brown heaths round them, bright and wide,
Nor to the snow, which, though 'twas all away
From the open heath, still by the hedgerows lay,
Nor to the shining sea-fowl, that with screams
Bore up from where the bright Atlantic gleams,
Swooping to landward; nor to where, quite clear,
The fell-fares settled on the thickets near.
And they would still have listened, till dark night
Came keen and chill down on the heather bright;
But, when the red glow on the sea grew cold,
And the gray turrets of the castle old
Looked sternly through the frosty evening-air,
Then Iseult took by the hand those children fair,
And brought her tale to an end, and found the path,
And led them home over the darkening heath.

And is she happy? Does she see unmoved
The days in which she might have lived and loved
Slip without bringing bliss slowly away,
One after one, tomorrow like today?
Joy has not found her yet, nor ever will —
Is it this thought which makes her mien so still,
Her features so fatigued, her eyes, though sweet,
So sunk, so rarely lifted save to meet
Her children's? She moves slow; her voice alone
Hath yet an infantine and silver tone,
But even that comes languidly; in truth,
She seems one dying in a mask of youth.
And now she will go home, and softly lay
Her laughing children in their beds, and play
Awhile with them before they sleep; and then
She'll light her silver lamp, which fishermen
Dragging their nets through the rough waves, afar,
Along this iron coast, know like a star,
And take her broidery-frame, and there she'll sit
Hour after hour, her gold curls sweeping it;
Lifting her soft-bent head only to mind
Her children, or to listen to the wind.
And when the clock peals midnight, she will move
Her work away, and let her fingers rove
Across the shaggy brows of Tristram's hound,
Who lies, guarding her feet, along the ground;
Or else she will fall musing, her blue eyes
Fixed, her slight hands clasped on her lap; then rise,
And at her prie-dieu kneel, until she have told
Her rosary-beads of ebony tipped with gold,
Then to her soft sleep — and tomorrow 'll be
Today's exact repeated effigy.

Yes, it is lonely for her in her hall.
The children, and the gray-haired seneschal,
Her women, and Sir Tristram's agéd hound,
Are there the sole companions to be found.
But these she loves; and noisier life than this
She would find ill to bear, weak as she is.
She has her children, too, and night and day
Is with them; and the wide heaths where they play,
The hollies, and the cliff, and the seashore,
The sand, the sea-birds, and the distant sails,
These are to her dear as to them; the tales
With which this day the children she beguiled
She gleaned from Breton grandames, when a child,
In every hut along this seacoast wild.
She herself loves them still, and, when they are told,
Can forget all to hear them, as of old.

Dear saints, it is not sorrow, as I hear,
Not suffering, which shuts up eye and ear
To all that has delighted them before,
And lets us be what we were once no more.
No, we may suffer deeply, yet retain
Power to be moved and soothed, for all our pain,
By what of old pleased us, and will again.

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37. **Breton history**, story of Brittany.

92. **prie-dieu**, prayer desk. 97. **seneschal**, steward.

No, ’tis the gradual furnace of the world,
In whose hot air our spirits are upcurled
Until they crumble, or else grow like steel —
Which kills in us the bloom, the youth, the spring —
Which leaves the fierce necessity to feel,
But takes away the power — this can avail,
By drying up our joy in everything,
To make our former pleasures all seem stale.
This, or some tyrannous single thought, some fit
Of passion, which subdues our souls to it,
Till for its sake alone we live and move —
Call it ambition, or remorse, or love —
This too can change us wholly, and make seem
All which we did before, shadow and dream.

And yet, I swear, it angers me to see
How this fool passion gulls men potently;
Being, in truth, but a diseased unrest,
And an unnatural overheat at best.
How they are full of languor and distress
Not having it; which when they do possess,
They straightway are burnt up with fume and care,
And spend their lives in posting here and there
Where this plague drives them; and have little ease,
Are furious with themselves, and hard to please,
Like that bold Cæsar, the famed Roman wight,
Who wept at reading of a Grecian knight
Who made a name at younger years than he;
Or that renowned mirror of chivalry,
Prince Alexander, Philip’s peerless son,
Who carried the great war from Macedon
Into the Soudan’s realm, and thundered on
To die at thirty-five in Babylon.

What tale did Iseult to the children say,
Under the hollies, that bright winter’s day?

She told them of the fairy-haunted land
Away the other side of Brittany,
Beyond the heaths, edged by the lonely sea;
Of the deep forest-glades of Broce-liande,
Through whose green boughs the golden sunshine creeps,
Where Merlin by the enchanted thorn-tree sleeps.
For her he came with the fay Vivian,
One April, when the warm days first began.
He was on foot, and that false fay, his friend,
On her white palfrey; here he met his end,
In these lone sylvan glades, that April-day.
This tale of Merlin and the lovely fay
Was the one Iseult chose, and she brought clear
Before the children’s fancy him and her.

Blowing between the stems, the forest-air
Had loosened the brown locks of Vivian’s hair,
Which played on her flushed cheek, and her blue eyes
Sparkled with mocking glee and exercise.
Her palfrey’s flanks were mired and bathed in sweat,
For they had traveled far and not stopped yet.
A brier in that tangled wilderness
Had scored her white right hand, which she allows
To rest ungloved on her green riding-dress;
The other warded off the drooping boughs.
But still she chatted on, with her blue eyes
Fixed full on Merlin’s face, her stately prize.
Her ’haviour had the morning’s fresh clear grace,
The spirit of the woods was in her face.
She looked so witching fair, that learned wight
Forgot his craft, and his best wits took flight;
And he grew fond, and eager to obey
His mistress, use her empire as she may.

They came to where the brushwood ceased, and day
Peered ’twixt the stems; and the ground broke away,
In a sloped sward down to a brawling brook;
And up as high as where they stood to look
On the brook’s farther side was clear, but then
The underwood and trees began again.
This open glen was studded thick with thorns
Then white with blossom; and you saw the horns,
Through last year’s fern, of the shy fallow-deer
Who come at noon down to the water here.
You saw the bright-eyed squirrels dart along
Under the thorns on the greensward; and strong
The blackbird whistled from the dingles near,
And the weird chipping of the woodpecker
Rang lonelily and sharp; the sky was fair,

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139. **fume,** passion. 143-150. **Cæsar . . . Babylon.** The Roman historian Suetonius (c. 75-160 A.D.) relates that Julius Cæsar wept when he heard of the conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), son of Philip, king of Macedon. Alexander became king of Macedon when he was twenty years old and conquered Persia when he was twenty-five. 149. **Soudan's,** Sultan's. 156. **Broce-liande,** a forest supposed to have been in Brittany. At one end of it was the tomb of Merlin, the magician of Arthur's Court, who was induced by his mistress Vivien to tell her the secret of his magic power. Having learned that secret, she used it to overcome him. See Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien.*

174. **scored,** scratched. 197. **dingles,** small valleys.

And a fresh breath of spring stirred everywhere.
Merlin and Vivian stopped on the slope's brow,
To gaze on the light sea of leaf and bough
Which glistering plays all round them, lone and mild,
As if to itself the quiet forest smiled.
Upon the brow-top grew a thorn, and here
The grass was dry and mossed, and you saw clear
Across the hollow; white anemones
Starred the cool turf, and clumps of primroses
Ran out from the dark underwood behind.
No fairer resting-place a man could find.
"Here let us halt," said Merlin then; and she
Nodded, and tied her palfrey to a tree.

They sate them down together, and a sleep
Fell upon Merlin, more like death, so deep.
Her finger on her lips, then Vivian rose,
And from her brown-locked head the wimple throws,
And takes it in her hand, and waves it over
The blossomed thorn-tree and her sleeping lover.
Nine times she waved the fluttering wimple round,
And made a little plot of magic ground.
And in that daisied circle, as men say,
Is Merlin prisoner till the judgment-day;
But she herself whither she will can rove —
For she was passing weary of his love. (1852)

## SELF-DEPENDENCE

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
"Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silvered roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he
Who finds himself loses his misery!"

(1852)

## A SUMMER NIGHT

In the deserted, moon-blanched street,
How lonely rings the echo of my feet!
Those windows, which I gaze at, frown,
Silent and white, unopening down,
Repellent as the world — but see,
A break between the housetops shows
The moon! and, lost behind her, fading dim
Into the dewy dark obscurity
Down at the far horizon's rim,
Doth a whole tract of heaven disclose!

And to my mind the thought
Is on a sudden brought
Of a past night, and a far different scene.
Headlands stood out into the moonlit deep
As clearly as at noon;
The spring-tide's brimming flow
Heaved dazzlingly between;
Houses, with long white sweep,
Girdled the glistening bay;
Behind, through the soft air,
The blue haze-cradled mountains spread away.
That night was far more fair —
But the same restless pacings to and fro,
And the same vainly throbbing heart was there,
And the same bright, calm moon.

And the calm moonlight seems to say:
*Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,*
*Which neither deadens into rest,*
*Nor ever feels the fiery glow*
*That whirls the spirit from itself away,*
*But fluctuates to and fro,*

---

216. **wimple**, a linen head covering.

*Never by passion quite possessed*
*And never quite benumbed by the world's sway?* —
And I, I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,
Where, in the sun's hot eye,
With heads bent o'er their toil, they languidly
Their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give,
Dreaming of naught beyond their prison-wall.
And as, year after year,
Fresh products of their barren labor fall
From their tired hands, and rest
Never yet comes more near,
Gloom settles slowly down over their breast;
And while they try to stem
The waves of mournful thought by which they are prest
Death in their prison reaches them,
Unfreed, having seen nothing, still unblest.

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart
Listeth, will sail;
Nor doth he know how there prevail,
Despotic on that sea,
Trade-winds which cross it from eternity.
Awhile he holds some false way, undebarred
By thwarting signs, and braves
The freshening wind and blackening waves,
And then the tempest strikes him; and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguished face and flying hair
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone?
Madman or slave, must man be one?

Plainness and clearness without shadow of stain!
Clearness divine!
Ye heavens, whose pure dark regions have no sign
Of languor, though so calm, and, though so great,
Are yet untroubled and unpassionate;
Who, though so noble, share in the world's toil,
And, though so tasked, keep free from dust and soil!
I will not say that your mild deeps retain
A tinge, it may be, of their silent pain
Who have longed deeply once, and longed in vain —
But I will rather say that you remain
A world above man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
How it were good to abide there, and breathe free;
How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

(1852)

## THE BURIED LIFE

Light flows our war of mocking words, and yet,
Behold, with tears mine eyes are wet!
I feel a nameless sadness o'er me roll.
Yes, yes, we know that we can jest,
We know, we know that we can smile!
But there's a something in this breast,
To which thy light words bring no rest,
And thy gay smiles no anodyne.
Give me thy hand, and hush awhile,
And turn those limpid eyes on mine,
And let me read there, love! thy inmost soul.

Alas! is even love too weak
To unlock the heart, and let it speak?
Are even lovers powerless to reveal
To one another what indeed they feel?
I knew the mass of men concealed
Their thoughts, for fear that if revealed
They would by other men be met
With blank indifference, or with blame reproved;
I knew they lived and moved
Tricked in disguises, alien to the rest
Of men, and alien to themselves — and yet
The same heart beats in every human breast!

But we, my love! — doth a like spell benumb
Our hearts, our voices? — must we too be dumb?

75. **Madman or slave**, a reference to the types of life just described—one (madman) in lines 51-73; the other (slave) in lines 37-50.

*The Buried Life.* The title refers to man's hidden self—the source of his thought and his feeling.

Ah! well for us, if even we,
Even for a moment, can get free
Our heart, and have our lips unchained;
For that which seals them hath been deep-ordained!

Fate, which foresaw
How frivolous a baby man would be —
By what distractions he would be possessed,
How he would pour himself in every strife,
And well-nigh change his own identity —
That it might keep from his capricious play
His genuine self, and force him to obey
Even in his own despite his being's law,
Bade through the deep recesses of our breast
The unregarded river of our life
Pursue with indiscernible flow its way;
And that we should not see
The buried stream, and seem to be
Eddying at large in blind uncertainty,
Though driving on with it eternally.

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to inquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us — to know
Whence our lives come and where they go.
And many a man in his own breast then delves,
But deep enough, alas! none ever mines.
And we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own line, have we been ourselves —
Hardly had skill to utter one of all
The nameless feelings that course through our breast,
But they course on for ever unexpressed.
And long we try in vain to speak and act
Our hidden self, and what we say and do
Is eloquent, is well — but 'tis not true!
And then we will no more be racked
With inward striving, and demand
Of all the thousand nothings of the hour
Their stupefying power;
Ah yes, and they benumb us at our call!
Yet still, from time to time, vague and forlorn,
From the soul's subterranean depth upborne
As from an infinitely distant land,
Come airs, and floating echoes, and convey
A melancholy into all our day.
Only — but this is rare —
When a belovéd hand is laid in ours,
When, jaded with the rush and glare
Of the interminable hours,
Our eyes can in another's eyes read clear,
When our world-deafened ear
Is by the tones of a loved voice caressed —
A bolt is shot back somewhere in our breast,
And a lost pulse of feeling stirs again;
The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean, we say, and what we would, we know.
A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur; and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.

And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth forever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes. (1852)

## STANZAS IN MEMORY OF THE AUTHOR OF "OBERMANN"

In front the awful Alpine track
Crawls up its rocky stair;
The autumn storm-winds drive the rack,
Close o'er it, in the air.

Behind are the abandoned baths
Mute in their meadows lone;
The leaves are on the valley-paths,
The mists are on the Rhone —

The white mists rolling like a sea!
I hear the torrents roar.
—Yes, Obermann, all speaks of thee;
I feel thee near once more!

I turn thy leaves! I feel their breath
Once more upon me roll;
That air of languor, cold, and death,
Which brooded o'er thy soul.

Fly hence, poor wretch, whoe'er thou art,
Condemned to cast about,

---

77-98. **Only . . . goes.** Cf. *Dover Beach*, lines 29-37, page 483.

*Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann."* Étienne Pivert de Sénancour (1770-1846) was the author of a French philosophic romance called *Obermann*. It is in the form of letters, many of which are supposed to have been written in a lonely Alpine valley in Switzerland where the hero of the romance lived. The book is devoted to descriptions of nature and discussions of the human soul. The tone is melancholy. Cf. *Obermann Once More*, page 489.

5. **abandoned baths**, the baths of Leuk, a village in the canton of Valais.

All shipwreck in thy own weak heart,
For comfort from without!

A fever in these pages burns
Beneath the calm they feign;
A wounded human spirit turns,
Here, on its bed of pain.

Yes, though the virgin mountain-air
Fresh through these pages blows;
Though to these leaves the glaciers spare
The soul of their white snows;

Though here a mountain-murmur swells
Of many a dark-boughed pine;
Though, as you read, you hear the bells
Of the high-pasturing kine —

Yet, through the hum of torrent lone,
And brooding mountain-bee,
There sobs I know not what ground-tone
Of human agony.

Is it for this, because the sound
Is fraught too deep with pain,
That, Obermann! the world around
So little loves thy strain?

Some secrets may the poet tell,
For the world loves new ways;
To tell too deep ones is not well —
It knows not what he says.

Yet, of the spirits who have reigned
In this our troubled day,
I know but two who have attained,
Save thee, to see their way.

By England's lakes, in gray old age,
His quiet home one keeps;
And one, the strong much-toiling sage,
In German Weimar sleeps.

But Wordsworth's eyes avert their ken
From half of human fate;
And Goethe's course few sons of men
May think to emulate.

For he pursued a lonely road,
His eyes on Nature's plan;
Neither made man too much a God,
Nor God too much a man.

Strong was he, with a spirit free
From mists, and sane, and clear;
Clearer, how much! than ours — yet we
Have a worse course to steer.

For though his manhood bore the blast
Of a tremendous time,
Yet in a tranquil world was passed
His tenderer youthful prime.

But we, brought forth and reared in hours
Of change, alarm, surprise —
What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
What leisure to grow wise?

Like children bathing on the shore,
Buried a wave beneath,
The second wave succeeds, before
We have had time to breathe.

Too fast we live, too much are tried,
Too harrassed, to attain
Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's wide
And luminous view to gain.

And then we turn, thou sadder sage,
To thee! we feel thy spell!
— The hopeless tangle of our age,
Thou, too, hast scanned it well!

Immovable thou sittest, still
As death, composed to bear!
Thy head is clear, thy feeling chill,
And icy thy despair.

Yes, as the son of Thetis said,
I hear thee saying now:
*Greater by far than thou are dead;*
*Strive not! die also thou!*

Ah! two desires toss about
The poet's feverish blood:
One drives him to the world without,
And one to solitude.

*The glow,* he cries, *the thrill of life,*
*Where, where do these abound?* —
Not in the world, not in the strife
Of men, shall they be found.

He who hath watched, not shared, the strife,
Knows how the day hath gone.
He only lives with the world's life,
Who hath renounced his own.

To thee we come, then! Clouds are rolled
Where thou, O seer! art set;
Thy realm of thought is drear and cold —
The world is colder yet!

---

50. **one**, Wordsworth (1770-1850). Cf. *Memorial Verses*, page 433. 51. **sage**, Goethe (1749-1832), who was buried at Weimar, Germany. Cf. *Memorial Verses*, page 433.

89. **son of Thetis**, Achilles, the famous Greek hero of the Trojan War. He preferred a short career of military glory to a long life of obscurity. When Lycaon asked Achilles (his captor) for mercy, Achilles, angered by the death of his friend Patroclus, made a long speech in which he said in part, "My friend, do thou too die; Patroclus is also dead, who was better far than thou art, and behold what kind of man I am; I too must die" (the *Iliad*, 21, 34 ff.).

And thou hast pleasures, too, to share
With those who come to thee —
Balms floating on thy mountain-air,
And healing sights to see.

How often, where the slopes are green
On Jaman, hast thou sate
By some high chalet-door, and seen
The summer-day grow late;

And darkness steal o'er the wet grass
With the pale crocus starred,
And reach that glimmering sheet of glass
Beneath the piny sward,

Lake Leman's waters, far below!
And watched the rosy light
Fade from the distant peaks of snow;
And on the air of night

Heard accents of the eternal tongue
Through the pine branches play —
Listened, and felt thyself grow young!
Listened and wept —— Away!

Away the dreams that but deceive
And thou, sad guide, adieu!
I go, fate drives me; but I leave
Half of my life with you.

We, in some unknown Power's employ,
Move on a rigorous line;
Can neither, when we will, enjoy,
Nor, when we will, resign.

I in the world must live; but thou,
Thou melancholy shade!
Wilt not, if thou canst see me now,
Condemn me, nor upbraid.

For thou art gone away from earth,
And place with those dost claim,
The Children of the Second Birth,
Whom the world could not tame;

And with that small, transfigured band,
Whom many a different way
Conducted to their common land,
Thou learn'st to think as they.

Christian and pagan, king and slave,
Soldier and anchorite,
Distinctions we esteem so grave,
Are nothing in their sight.

They do not ask, who pined unseen,
Who was on action hurled,
Whose one bond is, that all have been
Unspotted by the world.

There without anger thou wilt see
Him who obeys thy spell
No more, so he but rest, like thee,
Unsoiled! — and so, farewell.

Farewell! — Whether thou now liest near
That much-loved inland sea,
The ripples of whose blue waves cheer
Vevey and Meillerie:

And in that gracious region bland,
Where with clear-rustling wave
The scented pines of Switzerland
Stand dark round thy green grave,

Between the dusty vineyard-walls
Issuing on that green place
The early peasant still recalls
The pensive stranger's face,

And stoops to clear thy moss-grown date
Ere he plods on again —
Or whether, by maligner fate,
Among the swarms of men,

Where between granite terraces
The blue Seine rolls her wave,
The Capital of Pleasure sees
The hardly-heard-of grave —

Farewell! Under the sky we part,
In this stern Alpine dell.
O unstrung will! O broken heart!
A last, a last farewell! (1852)

## LINES

### WRITTEN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS

In this lone, open glade I lie,
Screened by deep boughs on either hand;
And at its end, to stay the eye,
Those black-crowned, red-boled pine-trees stand!

Birds here make song, each bird has his,
Across the girdling city's hum.
How green under the boughs it is!
How thick the tremulous sheep-cries come!

Sometimes a child will cross the glade
To take his nurse his broken toy;

---

114. **Jaman**, one of the Alpine peaks. 121. **Lake Leman**, Lake Geneva, Switzerland. 150. **anchorite**, a religious recluse.

164. **Vevey and Meillerie**, towns on Lake Geneva, Switzerland. 179. **Capital of Pleasure**, Paris.

*Lines Written in Kensington Gardens*. Kensington is a borough in the western part of London. The Gardens are surrounded by busy streets. This poem is regarded as one of the most Wordsworthian of Arnold's poems.

4. **red-boled pine-trees**, pine-trees with reddish trunks.

Sometimes a thrush flits overhead
Deep in her unknown day's employ.

Here at my feet what wonders pass,
What endless, active life is here!
What blowing daisies, fragrant grass!
An air-stirred forest, fresh and clear.

Scarce fresher is the mountain-sod
Where the tired angler lies, stretched out,
And, eased of basket and of rod,
Counts his day's spoil, the spotted trout.

In the huge world, which roars hard by,
Be others happy if they can!
But in my helpless cradle I
Was breathed on by the rural Pan.

I, on men's impious uproar hurled,
Think often, as I hear them rave,
That peace has left the upper world
And now keeps only in the grave.

Yet here is peace forever new!
When I who watch them am away,
Still all things in this glade go through
The changes of their quiet day.

Then to their happy rest they pass!
The flowers upclose, the birds are fed,
The night comes down upon the grass,
The child sleeps warmly in his bed.

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry,
The power to feel with others give!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live. (1852)

## REVOLUTIONS

Before man parted for this earthly strand,
While yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,
God put a heap of letters in his hand,
And bade him make with them what word he could.

And man has turned them many times; made Greece,
Rome, England, France — yes, nor in vain essayed
Way after way, changes that never cease!
The letters have combined, something was made.

But ah! an inextinguishable sense
Haunts him that he has not made what he should;
That he has still, though old, to recommence,
Since he has not yet found the word God would.

And empire after empire, at their height
Of sway, have felt this boding sense come on;
Have felt their huge frames not constructed right,
And drooped, and slowly died upon their throne.

One day, thou say'st, there will at last appear
The word, the order, which God meant should be.
— Ah! we shall know *that* well when it comes near;
The band will quit man's heart, he will breathe free.
(1852)

## THE YOUTH OF NATURE

Raised are the dripping oars,
Silent, the boat! the lake,
Lovely and soft as a dream,
Swims in the sheen of the moon.
The mountains stand at its head
Clear in the pure June-night,
But the valleys are flooded with haze.
Rydal and Fairfield are there;
In the shadow Wordsworth lies dead.
So it is, so it will be for aye.
Nature is fresh as of old,
Is lovely; a mortal is dead.

The spots which recall him survive,
For he lent a new life to these hills.
The Pillar still broods o'er the fields
Which border Ennerdale Lake,
And Egremont sleeps by the sea.
The gleam of The Evening Star

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18. **angler.** Arnold was an enthusiastic fisherman. 24. **breathed . . . Pan.** Pan was the god of shepherds and the country. Arnold was born at Laleham, a country village in Middlesex.

*The Youth of Nature.* This poem is a tribute to Wordsworth; it was written shortly after his death, in 1850. See *Memorial Verses*, page 433.
2. **the lake,** Rydal or Grasmere, in the Lake District, England. 8. **Rydal and Fairfield.** Wordsworth lived at Rydal Mount from 1813 till his death. Fairfield is a mountain north of Rydal Mount. 15. **The Pillar,** a prominent rock on a mountain in Cumberland. 17. **Egremont,** a town near the sea; it is seven miles from Ennerdale Lake (line 16). The places of lines 15-17 are mentioned in Wordsworth's *The Brothers.* 18. **The Evening Star,** the name of Michael's cottage above Grasmere, Westmoreland. It was so called because it was visible from a long distance. (See Wordsworth's *Michael.*)

Twinkles on Grasmere no more,
But ruined and solemn and gray
The sheepfold of Michael survives;
And, far to the south, the heath
Still blows in the Quantock coombs,
By the favorite waters of Ruth.
These survive! — yet not without pain,
Pain and dejection tonight,
Can I feel that their poet is gone.

He grew old in an age he condemned.
He looked on the rushing decay
Of the times which had sheltered his youth,
Felt the dissolving throes
Of a social order he loved;
Outlived his brethren, his peers,
And, like the Theban seer,
Died in his enemies' day.

Cold bubbled the spring of Tilphusa,
Copais lay bright in the moon,
Helicon glassed in the lake
Its firs, and afar rose the peaks
Of Parnassus, snowily clear;
Thebes was behind him in flames,
And the clang of arms in his ear,
When his awe-struck captors led
The Theban seer to the spring.
Tiresias drank and died.
Nor did reviving Thebes
See such a prophet again.

Well may we mourn, when the head
Of a sacred poet lies low
In an age which can rear them no more!
The complaining millions of men
Darken in labor and pain;
But he was a priest to us all
Of the wonder and bloom of the world,
Which we saw with his eyes, and were glad.
He is dead, and the fruit-bearing day
Of his race is past on the earth;
And darkness returns to our eyes.

For, oh! is it you, is it you,
Moonlight, and shadow, and lake,
And mountains, that fill us with joy,
Or the poet who sings you so well?
Is it you, O beauty, O grace,
O charm, O romance, that we feel,
Or the voice which reveals what you are?
Are ye, like daylight and sun,
Shared and rejoiced in by all?
Or are ye immersed in the mass
Of matter, and hard to extract,
Or sunk at the core of the world
Too deep for the most to discern?
Like stars in the deep of the sky,
Which arise on the glass of the sage,
But are lost when their watcher is gone.

"They are here" — I heard, as men heard
In Mysian Ida the voice
Of the Mighty Mother, or Crete,
The murmur of Nature reply —
"Loveliness, magic, and grace,
They are here! they are set in the world,
They abide; and the finest of souls
Hath not been thrilled by them all,
Nor the dullest been dead to them quite.
The poet who sings them may die,
But they are immortal and live,
For they are the life of the world.
Will ye not learn it, and know,
When ye mourn that a poet is dead,
That the singer was less than his themes,
Life, and emotion, and I?

"More than the singer are these.
Weak is the tremor of pain
That thrills in his mournfullest chord
To that which once ran through his soul.
Cold the elation of joy
In his gladdest, airiest song,
To that which of old in his youth
Filled him and made him divine.
Hardly his voice at its best
Gives us a sense of the awe,
The vastness, the grandeur, the gloom
Of the unlit gulf of himself.

"Ye know not yourselves; and your bards —
The clearest, the best, who have read
Most in themselves — have beheld
Less than they left unrevealed.
Ye express not yourselves — can you make
With marble, with color, with word,
What charmed you in others re-live?
Can thy pencil, O artist! restore
The figure, the bloom of thy love,
As she was in her morning of spring?
Canst thou paint the ineffable smile
Of her eyes as they rested on thine?

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23. **Quantock coombs,** valleys among the Quantock Hills in Somerset. Ruth (line 24), in Wordsworth's *Ruth,* visited these hills. 28. **He grew old . . . condemned.** In his youth Wordsworth sympathized with the French Revolution, but he later became disgusted with its excesses. The "dissolving throes" of line 31 refer to such movements as the Reform Bill of 1832 and the Repeal of the Corn Laws of 1846. By those dates Wordsworth had become a conservative. 33. **brethren . . . peers,** Coleridge and Southey, who were often associated with Wordsworth. They died in 1834 and 1843 respectively. 34. **Theban seer,** Tiresias, who is said to have met his death by drinking from a stream on Mount Tilphusa (line 36), in Bœotia. Copais (line 37) was a lake near Thebes. Mt. Helicon (line 38), sacred to the Muses, and Mt. Parnassus (line 40), sacred to Apollo, were also in Bœotia. 56-58. **He is dead . . . eyes.** Lines 56-58 express Arnold's usual pessimism about his own age.

77. **Mighty Mother,** Cybele, the great goddess of nature. As the "Mother of the Gods" she was worshiped on Mt. Ida in Mysia, Asia Minor. She was identified with Rhea, who was worshiped in Crete, a Greek island in the Mediterranean. 90. **I,** Nature. 91-102. Cf. Shelley's *Defence of Poetry.*

Can the image of life have the glow,
The motion of life itself?

"Yourselves and your fellows ye know not; and me,
The mateless, the one, will ye know?
Will ye scan me, and read me, and tell
Of the thoughts that ferment in my breast,
My longing, my sadness, my joy?
Will ye claim for your great ones the gift
To have rendered the gleam of my skies,
To have echoed the moan of my seas,
Uttered the voice of my hills?
When your great ones depart, will ye say:
*All things have suffered a loss,*
*Nature is hid in their grave?*

"Race after race, man after man,
Have thought that my secret was theirs,
Have dreamed that I lived but for them,
That they were my glory and joy.
— They are dust, they are changed, they are gone!
I remain." (1852)

## MORALITY

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then, when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask, how *she* viewed thy self-control,
Thy struggling, tasked morality —
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she, whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
"Ah, child!" she cries, "that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

"There is no effort on *my* brow —
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once — but where?

"I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime,
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God." (1852)

## THE FUTURE

A wanderer is man from his birth.
He was born in a ship
On the breast of the river of Time;
Brimming with wonder and joy
He spreads out his arms to the light,
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

As what he sees is, so have his thoughts been.
Whether he wakes,
Where the snowy mountainous pass,
Echoing the screams of the eagles,
Hems in its gorges the bed
Of the new-born clear-flowing stream;
Whether he first sees light
Where the river in gleaming rings
Sluggishly winds through the plain;
Whether in sound of the swallowing sea —
As is the world on the banks,
So is the mind of the man.

Vainly does each, as he glides,
Fable and dream
Of the lands which the river of Time
Had left ere he woke on its breast,
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.
Only the tract where he sails
He wots of; only the thoughts,
Raised by the objects he passes, are his.

Who can see the green earth any more
As she was by the sources of Time?
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plow?
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then roamed on her breast,
Her vigorous, primitive sons?

What girl
Now reads in her bosom as clear
As Rebekah read, when she sate
At eve by the palm-shaded well?
Who guards in her breast

---

*The Future.* This is one of the earliest of Arnold's poems to strike an optimistic note.

36-37. **Rebekah . . . well.** Rebekah was found at the well by the servant who had been sent by Abraham to get a wife for his son Isaac. (See *Genesis*, 24.)

As deep, as pellucid a spring
Of feeling, as tranquil, as sure?

What bard,
At the height of his vision, can deem
Of God, of the world, of the soul,
With a plainness as near,
As flashing as Moses felt
When he lay in the night by his flock
On the starlit Arabian waste?
Can rise and obey
The beck of the Spirit like him?

This tract which the river of Time
Now flows through with us, is the plain.
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
Bordered by cities and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the cries which we hear,
Changing and shot as the sights which we see.

And we say that repose has fled
Forever the course of the river of Time.
That cities will crowd to its edge
In a blacker, incessanter line;
That the din will be more on its banks,
Denser the trade on its stream,
Flatter the plain where it flows,
Fiercer the sun overhead.
That never will those on its breast
See an ennobling sight,
Drink of the feeling of quiet again.

But what was before us we know not,
And we know not what shall succeed.

Haply, the river of Time —
As it grows, as the towns on its marge
Fling their wavering lights
On a wider, statelier stream —
May acquire, if not the calm
Of its early mountainous shore,
Yet a solemn peace of its own.

And the width of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam
As it draws to the Ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast —
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

(1852)

# SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

## AN EPISODE

And the first gray of morning filled the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hushed, and still the men were plunged in sleep.
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the gray dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he passed, which stood
Clustering like beehives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere;
Through the black tents he passed, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink — the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crowned the top
With a clay fort; but that was fallen, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick-piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dulled; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful, and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek

---

45. **Moses felt.** When Moses was watching sheep in "the backside of the desert" near Mt. Horeb (Sinai), in Arabia, God appeared to him in a burning bush and commanded him to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. (See *Exodus*, 3.) 57. **shot**, variegated. Cf. *shot silk*.

*Sohrab and Rustum.* This narrative poem is based upon an episode in the great Persian epic *Shah Namah* (*Book of Kings*) written by the poet Firdausi about 1000 A.D. Rustum was the most illustrious of Persian heroes. His combat with Sohrab, his unknown son, which belongs to the realm of folklore, was supposed to have taken place about 600 B.C. Arnold found the story in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*. See Critical Notes.

2. **Oxus**, the chief river of central Asia. 3. **Tartar.** The Tartars were wandering savage tribes in central Asia and southern Russia. Although a Persian by birth, Sohrab is serving under Afrasiab, the Tartar king. 11. **Peran-Wisa**, leader of the Tartar army. 15. **Pamere**, a lofty plateau in central Asia. 25. **thick-piled**, having a thick pile, or nap.

Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army marched;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone —
Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest today; but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To meet me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it; if I fall —
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sighed, and said:
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press forever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,
And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum — seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray;
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seistan, with Zal, his father old,
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorred approaches of old age,
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go! — Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain — but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropped Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woolen coat
He passed, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheepskin cap,
Black, glossy, curled, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and called
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun by this had risen, and cleared the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain; so Haman bade —
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they streamed;
As when some gray November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian seaboard — so they streamed:
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheepskin caps and with long spears —
Large men, large steeds, who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares;
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands —
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink

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40. **Samarcand**, a city in Turkestan; once the capital of Tartary. 42. **Ader-baijan**, a province in northwestern Persia. It was the home of Sohrab's mother Tahminah (line 590). 60. **common**, general. 82. **Seistan**, a district bordering Persia and Afghanistan. 85. **Persian King**, Kai Khosroo (line 223).

101. **Kara-Kul**, a district in south-central Asia. 111 ff. **As when**, etc. This is an example of the so-called epic simile—that is, a simile, common in epic poetry, which plays upon minute details of comparison. 113. **Casbin**, a city in northern Persia. 114. **Elburz**, mountains on the northern border of Persia. **Aralian**, of the Aral Sea, in central Asia. 115. **frore**, frozen. 119. **Bokhara**, a large district in central Asia. 120. **Khiva**, a district in the valley of the lower Oxus. 121. **Toorkmuns**, a branch of the Turkish race, living in central Asia. 122. **Tukas**, from northwest Persia. **Salore**, a tribe living east of the Caspian Sea. 123. **Attruck**, a river in northern Persia.

The acrid milk of camels, and their wells;
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service owned,
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes — men with scanty beards
And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste,
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere.
These all filed out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians formed:
First, a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seemed,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshaled battalions bright in burnished steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks,
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And checked his ranks, and fixed them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts today.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearléd ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy —
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of peddlers, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow,
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of traveling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parched throats with sugared mulberries —
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'erhanging snows —
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King;
These came and counseled, and then Gudurz said:
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitched his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name.
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight.
Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried:
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."
He spake; and Peran-Wisa turned and strode
Back through the opening squadrons to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And crossed the camp which lay behind, and reached,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitched; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camped around.
And Gudurz entered Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food —
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And played with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he looked, and saw him stand,

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128. **Ferghana**, a district in Turkestan, south of Samarcand. 129. **Jaxartes**, an early name of the Sir-Daria River, which flows through Turkestan into the Aral Sea. 131. **Kipchak**, a district in central Asia. 132. **Kalmucks**, wandering Mongolian tribes living in western Siberia. **Kuzzaks**, Cossacks, a warlike people in southern Russia and southwestern Asia. 133. **Pole**, the north pole. **Kirghizzes**, a nomadic people of northern Turkestan. 138. **Ilyats of Khorassan**, tribes of Khorassan, a province in northeastern Persia. 156. **corn**, grain. 160 **Cabool**, Kabul, an important commercial city in northern Afghanistan. 161. **Indian Caucasus**, a mountain range between Turkestan and Afghanistan.

And with a cry sprang up and dropped the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."
But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said:
"Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
But not today; today has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion — and thou know'st his name —
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
And he is young, and Iran's chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"
He spoke; but Rustum answered with a smile:
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older; if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely; for the King, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged molder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young —
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have —
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-haired Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,
And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say,
'Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men.'"
And, greatly moved, then Rustum made reply:
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of naught would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was matched
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frowned; and Gudurz turned and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy —
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door and called
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So armed, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Followed him like a faithful hound at heel —
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And reared him; a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broidered green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were worked
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So followed, Rustum left his tents, and crossed
The camp, and to the Persian host appeared.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hailed; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,

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217. **Iran,** Persia. 223. **Kai Khosroo,** thought to be Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire, sixth century B.C.

257. **plain arms,** arms devoid of devices that would betray his identity. 277. **dight,** decorated, adorned.

By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands —
So dear to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanced;
And Sohrab armed in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare —
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blackened fingers makes her fire
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whitened window-panes,
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be — so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs. Long he perused
His spirited air, and wondered who he was;
For very young he seemed, tenderly reared:
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound —
So slender Sohrab seemed, so softly reared.
And a deep pity entered Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckoned to him with his hand, and said:
"O thou young man, the air of heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe —
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be governed! quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streaked with its first gray hairs; hope filled his soul,
And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasped his hand within his own, and said:
"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turned away, and spake to his own soul:
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say: 'Rustum is here!'
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way.
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
'I challenged once, when the two armies camped
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared; then he and I
Changed gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turned, and sternly spake aloud:
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast called
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
For well I know that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were revealed,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this —
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:

---

286. **Bahrein**, the Aval Islands, in the Persian Gulf, noted for their pearl fisheries. 288. **tale**, count.

Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answered, on his feet:
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young —
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Poised on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spoke, and Rustum answered not, but hurled
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk,
That long has towered in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hissed, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide; then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turned the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopped trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough — like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs — so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum followed his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutched the sand;
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierced the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he looked on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st thou art not Rustum; be it so!
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too —
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touched before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou
Mayst fight; fight *them*, when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"
He ceased, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regained his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mailed right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soiled
His stately crest, and dimmed his glittering arms.

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412. **Hyphasis or Hydaspes**, rivers in northern India.

452. **autumn star**, Sirius, the Dog Star, associated among certain ancient peoples with hot, dry weather and with fevers.

His breast heaved, his lips foamed, and twice his voice
Was choked with rage; at last these words broke way:
"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curled minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning! all the pity I had is gone,
Because thou hast shamed me before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."
He spoke; and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword. At once they rushed
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dashed with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees — such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hailed.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in heaven, and darked the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapped the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapped, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And laboring breath: first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach the skin,
And Rustum plucked it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bowed his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,
And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, uttered a dreadful cry —
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pained desert-lion, who all day
Hath trailed the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand.
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it crossed his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quailed not, but rushed on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bowed
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remained alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted, "Rustum!" Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed; back he recoiled one step,
And scanned with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewildered; and he dropped
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reeled and, staggering back, sank to the ground;
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair—
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.
Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent,
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.

Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No! Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I matched with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till today I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that belovéd name unnerved my arm —
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfixed an unarmed foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear:
The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world,
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierced her with an arrow as she rose,
And followed her to find her where she fell
Far off — anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers — never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by —
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
But, with a cold incredulous voice, he said:
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here,
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee! for an only son
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
Oh, could I live, till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done.
But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenseless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."
He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listened, plunged in thought.
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he called back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all —
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deemed that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son,
Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deemed he; yet he listened, plunged in thought.
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gathered in his eyes;
For he remembered his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds — so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom;
And that old king, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time —
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe

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592. **Koords,** Curds, a warlike people of northwestern Persia. 596. **bruited up,** noised abroad. 613. **style,** name.

Of an unskillful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass — so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved.
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false — thou art not Rustum's son.
For Rustum had no son; one child he had —
But one — a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us —
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answered him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fixed spear grew fierce,
And he desiréd to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die —
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, pricked upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees tottered, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet clanked aloud;
And to his heart he pressed the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak, hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed
His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And showed a sign in faint vermilion points
Pricked. As a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift; at early morn he paints,
And all day long, and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands —
So delicately pricked the sign appeared
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin which of old reared Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and reared, and loved —
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scanned it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touched it with his hand and said:
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he uttered one sharp cry:
"O boy — thy father!" — and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud passed before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawled to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kissed his lips,
And with fond, faltering fingers stroked his cheeks,
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum, and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirched his hair —
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong, convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutched his sword,
To draw it and forever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:
"Father, forbear! for I but meet today
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it! but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engaged
The strife, and hurled me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this! I find

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656. **Truth . . . men.** Cf. Browning's *A Death in the Desert*, lines 188-197, and note, page 285.

My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say, 'My son!'
Quick! quick! for numbered are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away —
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."
So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kissed him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark, compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears rolled down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said: —
"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field!"
But Sohrab looked upon the horse and said:
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said,
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuffed the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often stroked thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soaked with wine,
And said, 'O Ruksh! bear Rustum well!' — but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrowed face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodged among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only, Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers, Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewailed:
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
But, with a grave, mild voice, Sohrab replied:
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live;
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them; what have they done?
They followed me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-haired Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry,
'Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!'
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be; for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,

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751-752. **Helmund . . . Zirrah,** in the district of Seistan, Afghanistan.

763-764. **Moorghab, Tejend, Kohik,** rivers in Afghanistan. 765. **Sir,** the Jaxartes River, in Turkestan. (See line 129 and note, page 461.)

And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all that I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were called champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have —
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: 'O son, I weep thee not too sore,
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!'
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."
  Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,
Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."
  And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said:
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."
  He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flowed with the stream — all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soiled,
Like the soiled tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gathered, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head drooped low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay —
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he opened them,
And fixed them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebbed, and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
  So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-reared
By Jemshid in Persepolis, to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side —
So in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
  And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darkened all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
  But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hushed Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon — he flowed
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parceled Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles —
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,
A foiled circuitous wanderer — till at last
The longed-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

(1853)

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861. **Jemshid**, a mythical king of Persia; his capital was Persepolis. 878. **Chorasmian waste**, a region in Turkestan; the modern Khiva. 880. **Orgunjè**, a village on the Oxus, near the Aral Sea. 890. **home of waters**, the Aral Sea.

## PHILOMELA

Hark! ah, the nightingale —
The tawny-throated!
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark! — what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewildered brain
That wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain —
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,
And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy racked heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou tonight behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and seared eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia —
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again — thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain! (1853)

## REQUIESCAT

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabined, ample spirit,
It fluttered and failed for breath.
Tonight it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death. (1853)

## From THE CHURCH OF BROU

### 3. THE TOMB

So rest, forever rest, O princely pair!
In your high church, 'mid the still mountain-air,
Where horn, and hound, and vassals, never come.
Only the blessed saints are smiling dumb,
From the rich painted windows of the nave,
On aisle, and transept, and your marble grave;
Where thou, young prince! shalt never more arise
From the fringed mattress where thy duchess lies,
On autumn-mornings, when the bugle sounds,
And ride across the drawbridge with thy hounds
To hunt the boar in the crisp woods till eve;
And thou, O princess! shalt no more receive,
Thou and thy ladies, in the hall of state,
The jaded hunters with their bloody freight,
Coming benighted to the castle-gate.
So sleep, forever sleep, O marble pair!
Or, if ye wake, let it be then, when fair
On the carved western front a flood of light
Streams from the setting sun, and colors bright
Prophets, transfigured saints, and martyrs brave,
In the vast western window of the nave;
And on the pavement round the tomb there glints
A checker-work of glowing sapphire-tints,

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*Philomela.* Philomela and Procne were daughters of Pandion, king of Athens. Procne was the wife of Tereus, king of Thrace. Tereus dishonored Philomela and then cut out her tongue that she might not betray him; but Philomela wove the story in a piece of tapestry, which she gave to her sister. Procne then killed her son Itys (Itylus), served him as food to his father, and fled with Philomela. On being pursued by Tereus, the sisters prayed for deliverance and were changed into birds—Philomela into a nightingale and Procne into a swallow. In the poem Arnold has reversed the positions of the sisters. See Swinburne's *Itylus*, page 675.

27. **Daulis**, the scene of the tragedy, in Phocis, Greece. The Cephissus was the chief river of Phocis. 28. **Eugenia**, an imaginary person.

*Requiescat.* The title means *May She Rest.*

2. **yew**, a common tree in graveyards.

13. **cabined**, shut up, as in a cabin.

*The Church of Brou.* The Church of Notre Dame de Brou is about a mile from Bourg-en-Bresse, an important town in east-central France. It contains the tombs of Philibert II, Duke of Savoy, and his wife, Margaret of Austria. These are the "princely pair" of line 1. Philibert died in 1504 after drinking cold water when he was heated from hunting. His wife built the church to his memory in 1511-36. Following a French writer, Arnold wrongly placed Brou among the mountains. The section of the poem here printed was originally published separately, under the title *A Tomb among the Mountains.* It is greatly superior to the rest of the poem.

And amethyst, and ruby — then unclose
Your eyelids on the stone where ye repose,
And from your broidered pillows lift your heads,
And rise upon your cold white marble beds;
And, looking down on the warm rosy tints,
Which checker, at your feet, the illumined flints,
Say: *What is this? we are in bliss — forgiven —*
*Behold the pavement of the courts of heaven!*
Or let it be on autumn nights, when rain
Doth rustlingly above your heads complain
On the smooth leaden roof, and on the walls
Shedding her pensive light at intervals
The moon through the clere-story windows shines,
And the wind washes through the mountain-pines.
Then, gazing up 'mid the dim pillars high,
The foliaged marble forest where ye lie,
*Hush*, ye will say, *it is eternity!*
*This is the glimmering verge of heaven, and these*
*The columns of the heavenly palaces!*
And, in the sweeping of the wind, your ear
The passage of the angels' wings will hear,
And on the lichen-crusted leads above
The rustle of the eternal rain of love.

(1853)

English pastoral

## THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the wattled cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropped herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanched green,
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late —
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon, comes back his stores to use —
Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn —
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screened is this nook o'er the high, half-reaped field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

Realistic Touch

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book —
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,
One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gypsy-lore,
And roamed the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came, as most men deemed, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life inquired;
Whereat he answered that the gypsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learned, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

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36. **clere-story**, the upper wall of a church containing windows through which light is admitted into the nave. 45. **leads**, roofs made of lead.

*The Scholar-Gypsy.* See Critical Notes.

2. **wattled cotes**, sheepfolds built of wattles, or interwoven twigs. 10. **the quest**, the search for the Scholar-Gypsy, who is supposed still to haunt the vicinity.

19. **corn**, grain, wheat. 25. **convolvulus**, a species of morning-glory. 31. **Glanvil's book.** See Critical Note on title. 34. **pregnant parts**, inventive faculties.

This said, he left them, and returned no more. —
But rumors hung about the country-side,
That the lost scholar long was seen to stray,
Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied,
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the gypsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frocked boors
Had found him seated at their entering.

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast passed their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moored to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met
Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Plucked in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more! —
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.
Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers — the frail-leafed, white anemone,
Dark bluebells drenched with dews of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves —
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-winged swallows haunt the glittering Thames,
To bathe in the abandoned lasher pass,
Have often passed thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Marked thine outlandish garb, thy figure spare,
Thy dark vague eyes, and soft abstracted air —
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And marked thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood —
Where most the gypsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see

---

57. **Hurst,** Cumner Hurst, a prominent hill in the parish of Cumner, southwest of Oxford. 58. **Berkshire,** a county south of Oxford. 59. **ingle-bench,** bench in the chimney corner. 74. **Bab-lock-hithe,** a ferry over the Thames about two miles west of the village of Cumner. 76. **punt's . . . round.** The Scholar-Gypsy is seen reposing in a boat moored to the bank. The punt, or ferryboat, is pulled across the stream by a rope, and the boat moves in a kind of curve. The rope "chops" or suddenly shifts with the wind or current. 79. **Wychwood,** a forest about ten miles northwest of Oxford.

83. **Fyfield . . . May,** a reference to the maypole dance at Fyfield, a village six miles southwest of Oxford. The large elm was a landmark for all the countryside. 91. **Godstow Bridge,** about two miles up the Thames from Oxford. 95. **lasher pass,** pool below a dam. 111. **Bagley Wood,** southwest of Oxford. It was a favorite place of Arnold's father.

With scarlet patches tagged and shreds of gray,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly —
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a withered spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travelers go,
Have I not passed thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapped in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksey and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climbed the hill,
And gained the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turned once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Church hall —
Then sought thy straw in some sequestered grange.

But what — I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wandered from the studious walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gypsy tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid —
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

— No, no, thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal men?
'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
And numb the elastic powers,
Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
To the just-pausing Genius we remit
Our worn-out life, and are — what we have been.

People tear themselves to

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?
Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since numbered with the dead!
Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!
The generations of thy peers are fled,
And we ourselves shall go;
But thou possessest an immortal lot,
And we imagine thee exempt from age
And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,
Because thou hadst — what we, alas! have not.

Had Clough done anything

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
O life unlike to ours!
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
Who never deeply felt, nor clearly willed,
Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
Whose vague resolves never have been fulfilled;

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114. **scarlet patches . . . gray.** The bright-colored, tattered garments of the gypsies were hung on the bushes. 115. **Thessaly,** a piece of forest ground near Bagley Wood. 125. **Hinksey,** a village south of Oxford. 129. **Christ-Church hall,** the dining-hall in Christ Church College, Oxford.

147. **teen,** sorrow. 149. **just-pausing Genius.** According to the ancients the Genius of a man was his spirit or guardian angel. The phrase may mean that the Genius pauses just for a moment before departing, or that the even-handed spirit of the world impartially ends individual lives.

For whom each year we see
Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
Who hesitate and falter life away,
And lose tomorrow the ground won today —
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it! — but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
Who most hast suffered, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tells us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.

This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipped patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbor to despair —
But none has hope like thine!
Thou through the fields and through the woods dost stray,
Roaming the country-side, a truant boy,
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
And life ran gayly as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its head o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife —
Fly hence, our contact fear!
Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silvered branches of the glade —
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue,
On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;
And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
Like us distracted, and like us unblest.
Soon, soon thy cheer would die,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfixed thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Speed of life and Arnold
happened!!

Then fly our greetings, fly our speech and smiles!
— As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,
Descried at sunrise an emerging prow
Lifting the cool-haired creepers stealthily,
The fringes of a southward-facing brow
Among the Ægæan isles;
And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,
Freighted with amber grapes, and Chian wine,
Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steeped in brine —
And knew the intruders on his ancient home,

Don't face the hurry of modern life; retreat

The young light-hearted masters of the waves —
And snatched his rudder, and shook out more sail;
And day and night held on indignantly
O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,

---

182. ff. **one who suffered,** etc. These lines have been taken to refer to Carlyle or Tennyson. See *In Memoriam,* Section 5, line 5, page 58. 190. **anodynes,** drugs to soothe pain. 208-209. **Dido . . . turn.** Dido, queen of Carthage, killed herself because she was deserted by Æneas. On his journey through Hades, Æneas met the shade of Dido, but she turned scornfully away from him. The incident is related in Virgil's *Æneid,* 6, 450-71.

220. **dingles,** wooded dells. 232. **Tyrian trader.** The Phœnicians of the city of Tyre were the chief traders in the Mediterranean from 900 to 700 B.C. They were gradually displaced by the Greeks. 234. **cool-haired creepers,** foliage overhanging the entrance to some cavern or inlet. 236. **Ægæan isles,** islands in the Ægæan Sea, between Greece and Asia Minor. 238. **Chian wine,** wine from Chios, an island in the Ægæan Sea. 239. **tunnies,** a kind of large fish. 244. **Midland waters,** Mediterranean Sea.

Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,
To where the Atlantic raves
Outside the western straits; and unbent sails
There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam,
Shy traffickers, the dark Iberians come;
And on the beach undid his corded bales.
(1853)

## STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

Through Alpine meadows soft-suffused
With rain, where thick the crocus blows,
Past the dark forges long disused,
The mule-track from Saint Laurent goes.
The bridge is crossed, and slow we ride,
Through forest, up the mountain-side.

The autumnal evening darkens round,
The wind is up, and drives the rain;
While, hark! far down, with strangled sound
Doth the Dead Guier's stream complain,
Where that wet smoke, among the woods,
Over his boiling caldron broods.

Swift rush the spectral vapors white
Past limestone scars with ragged pines,
Showing — then blotting from our sight! —
Halt — through the cloud-drift something shines!
High in the valley, wet and drear,
The huts of Courrerie appear.

*Strike leftward!* cries our guide; and higher
Mounts up the stony forest-way.
At last the encircling trees retire;
Look! through the showery twilight gray
What pointed roofs are these advance? —
A palace of the kings of France?

Approach, for what we seek is here!
Alight, and sparely sup, and wait
For rest in this outbuilding near;
Then cross the sward and reach that gate.
Knock; pass the wicket! Thou art come
To the Carthusians' world-famed home.

The silent courts, where night and day
Into their stone-carved basins cold
The splashing icy fountains play —
The humid corridors behold!
Where, ghostlike in the deepening night,
Cowled forms brush by in gleaming white.

The chapel, where no organ's peal
Invests the stern and naked prayer —
With penitential cries they kneel
And wrestle; rising then, with bare
And white uplifted faces stand,
Passing the Host from hand to hand;

Each takes, and then his visage wan
Is buried in his cowl once more.
The cells! — the suffering Son of Man
Upon the wall — the knee-worn floor —
And where they sleep, that wooden bed,
Which shall their coffin be, when dead!

The library, where tract and tome
Not to feed priestly pride are there,
To hymn the conquering march of Rome,
Nor yet to amuse, as ours are!
They paint of souls the inner strife,
Their drops of blood, their death in life.

The garden, overgrown — yet mild,
See, fragrant herbs are flowering there!
Strong children of the Alpine wild
Whose culture is the brethren's care;
Of human tasks their only one,
And cheerful works beneath the sun.

Those halls, too, destined to contain
Each its own pilgrim-host of old,
From England, Germany, or Spain —
All are before me! I behold
The House, the Brotherhood austere!
— And what am I, that I am here?

For rigorous teachers seized my youth,
And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,
Showed me the high, white star of Truth,
There bade me gaze, and there aspire.
Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
*What dost thou in this living tomb?*

Forgive me, masters of the mind!
At whose behest I long ago
So much unlearnt, so much resigned —
I come not here to be your foe!

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245. **Syrtes**, the Gulf of Sidra, on the northern coast of Africa. 247. **western straits**, Strait of Gibraltar. 249. **Iberians**, early inhabitants of Spain and Portugal.

*Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse.* The Grande Chartreuse, located in the French Alps about fourteen miles from Grenoble, was formerly a monastery of the Order of Carthusians. It was founded by St. Bruno, about 1084, but the present building dates from 1678. The monks were compelled to leave France in 1903. Arnold had visited the Grande Chartreuse in 1852.

4. **Saint Laurent**, about five miles from the monastery. 10. **Dead Guier's stream**, the Guiers Mort River, which rises near the monastery. 14. **scars**, cliffs. 18. **Courrerie**, a village in the mountains.

42. **Host**, the consecrated bread used in the Mass. 67. **rigorous teachers**, like Arnold's own father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, of Rugby.

I seek these anchorites, not in ruth,
To curse and to deny your truth;

Not as their friend, or child, I speak!
But as, on some far northern strand,
Thinking of his own gods, a Greek
In pity and mournful awe might stand
Before some fallen Runic stone —
For both were faiths, and both are gone.

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride —
I come to shed them at their side.

Oh, hide me in your gloom profound,
Ye solemn seats of holy pain!
Take me, cowled forms, and fence me round,
Till I possess my soul again;
Till free my thoughts before me roll,
Not chafed by hourly false control!

For the world cries your faith is now
But a dead time's exploded dream;
My melancholy, sciolists vow,
Is a passed mode, an outworn theme —
As if the world had ever had
A faith, or sciolists been sad!

Ah, if it *be* passed, take away,
At least, the restlessness, the pain;
Be man henceforth no more a prey
To these out-dated stings again!
The nobleness of grief is gone —
Ah, leave us not the fret alone!

But — if you cannot give us ease —
Last of the race of them who grieve
Here leave us to die out with these
Last of the people who believe!
Silent, while years engrave the brow;
Silent — the best are silent now.

Achilles ponders in his tent,
The kings of modern thought are dumb;
Silent they are, though not content,
And wait to see the future come.
They have the grief men had of yore,
But they contend and cry no more.

Our fathers watered with their tears
This sea of time whereon we sail,
Their voices were in all men's ears
Who passed within their puissant hail.
Still the same ocean round us raves,
But we stand mute, and watch the waves.

For what availed it, all the noise
And outcry of the former men? —
Say, have their sons achieved more joys?
Say, is life lighter now than then?
The sufferers died, they left their pain —
The pangs which tortured them remain.

What helps it now that Byron bore,
With haughty scorn which mocked the smart,
Through Europe to the Ætolian shore,
The pageant of his bleeding heart?
That thousands counted every groan,
And Europe made his woe her own?

What boots it, Shelley! that the breeze
Carried thy lovely wail away,
Musical through Italian trees
Which fringe thy soft blue Spezzian bay?
Inheritors of thy distress
Have restless hearts one throb the less?

Or are we easier, to have read,
O Obermann! the sad, stern page,
Which tells us how thou hidd'st thy head
From the fierce tempest of thine age
In the lone brakes of Fontainebleau,
Or chalets near the Alpine snow?

Ye slumber in your silent grave! —
The world, which for an idle day
Grace to your mood of sadness gave,
Long since hath flung her weeds away.
The eternal trifler breaks your spell;
But we — we learned your lore too well!

Years hence, perhaps, may dawn an age,
More fortunate, alas! than we,
Which without hardness will be sage,
And gay without frivolity.
Sons of the world, oh, speed those years;
But, while we wait, allow our tears!

77. **anchorites,** religious hermits. **ruth,** repentance. 83. **Runic stone,** a stone bearing runes, a form of lettering used by the early people of northern Europe. 85. **two worlds,** the old age of faith with its worn-out conventions and the new age that will establish faith on some new and acceptable basis of unity and harmony. 99. **sciolists,** persons of superficial knowledge; from Latin *scio* (*know*). 115. **Achilles . . . tent.** During the siege of Troy, Achilles, one of the Greek heroes, retired to his tent and refused to take part in the war because he had been deprived of his captive maiden. It has been suggested that Arnold here refers to Newman's two years of quiet study, 1843-45, before he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

133. **Byron.** Byron died at Missolonghi, on the shores of Ætolia, Greece, in 1824. When exiled from England, Byron traveled through France and Italy to Greece, and showed off his hurts in all that he wrote during these years. Byron and his writings exercised a strange hold upon Europe. 139. **Shelley.** After his union with Mary Godwin, Shelley spent most of his life abroad. He was drowned in the Gulf of Spezzia, south of Genoa, Italy, in 1822. 146. **Obermann.** See note on *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann,"* page 453. 149. **Fontainebleau,** a city south of Paris.

Allow them! We admire with awe
The exulting thunder of your race;
You give the universe your law,
You triumph over time and space!
Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
We laud them, but they are not ours.

We are like children reared in shade
Beneath some old-world abbey wall,
Forgotten in a forest-glade,
And secret from the eyes of all.
Deep, deep the greenwood round them waves,
Their abbey, and its close of graves!

But, where the road runs near the stream,
Oft through the trees they catch a glance
Of passing troops in the sun's beam —
Pennon, and plume, and flashing lance!
Forth to the world those soldiers fare,
To life, to cities, and to war!

And through the wood, another way,
Faint bugle-notes from far are borne,
Where hunters gather, staghounds bay,
Round some fair forest-lodge at morn.
Gay dames are there, in sylvan green;
Laughter and cries — those notes between!

The banners flashing through the trees
Make their blood dance and chain their eyes;
That bugle-music on the breeze
Arrests them with a charmed surprise.
Banner by turns and bugle woo:
*Ye shy recluses, follow too!*

O children, what do ye reply? —
"Action and pleasure, will ye roam
Through these secluded dells to cry
And call us? — but too late ye come!
Too late for us your call ye blow,
Whose bent was taken long ago.

"Long since we pace this shadowed nave;
We watch those yellow tapers shine,
Emblems of hope over the grave,
In the high altar's depth divine;
The organ carries to our ear
Its accents of another sphere.

"Fenced early in this cloistral round
Of reverie, of shade, of prayer,
How should we grow in other ground?
How can we flower in foreign air?
— Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease;
And leave our desert to its peace!"

(1855)

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174. **close,** enclosure. 210. **desert,** our life devoid of action, in the cloister.

## THYRSIS

A MONODY, *to commemorate the author's friend,* ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH,
*who died at Florence,* 1861

How changed is here each spot man makes or fills!
In the two Hinkseys nothing keeps the same;
The village street its haunted mansion lacks,
And from the sign is gone Sibylla's name,
And from the roofs the twisted chimney-stacks —
Are ye too changed, ye hills?
See, 'tis no foot of unfamiliar men
Tonight from Oxford up your pathway strays!
Here came I often, often, in old days —
Thyrsis and I; we still had Thyrsis then.

Runs it not here, the track by Childsworth Farm,
Past the high wood, to where the elm-tree crowns
The hill behind whose ridge the sunset flames?
The signal-elm, that looks on Ilsley Downs,
The Vale, the three lone weirs, the youthful Thames? —
This winter's-eve is warm,
Humid the air! leafless, yet soft as spring,
The tender purple spray on copse and briers!
And that sweet city with her dreaming spires,
She needs not June for beauty's heightening,

Lovely all times she lies, lovely tonight! —
Only, methinks, some loss of habit's power
Befalls me wandering through this upland dim;
Once passed I blindfold here, at any hour;
Now seldom come I, since I came with him.

---

*Thyrsis.* See Critical Notes. In the poem Arnold speaks of himself as Corydon (line 80) and of Clough as Thyrsis. These are conventional names in pastoral poetry; they are found in Virgil's Seventh *Eclogue*, Milton's *L'Allegro*, and elsewhere. Arnold's poem is full of reminiscences of the days spent with Clough in Oxford and its environs.

2. **two Hinkseys,** villages southwest of Oxford, across the river. 4. **Sibylla's name.** Sibylla (Sibyl) was a prophetess of classical mythology. 5. **twisted,** set at an angle. 11. **Childsworth Farm,** modern Chilswell Farm, three miles from Oxford. 14. **signal-elm.** This famous tree has frequently been identified with an oak tree standing at the top of the knoll on the Oxford side of the ridge. A large elm a short distance below the summit of the ridge better fits the description. **Ilsley Downs.** Ilsley is a parish in West Berkshire. 15. **weirs,** dams. **youthful Thames.** The Thames River is about fifty yards wide at Oxford. 19. **sweet city,** Oxford.

That single elm-tree bright
Against the west — I miss it! is it gone?
We prized it dearly; while it stood, we said,
Our friend, the gypsy-scholar, was not dead;
While the tree lived, he in these fields lived on.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here,
But once I knew each field, each flower, each stick;
And with the country-folk acquaintance made
By barn in threshing-time, by new-built rick.
Here, too, our shepherd-pipes we first assayed.
Ah me! this many a year
My pipe is lost, my shepherd's holiday!
Needs must I lose them, needs with heavy heart
Into the world and wave of men depart;
But Thyrsis of his own will went away.

It irked him to be here; he could not rest.
He loved each simple joy the country yields,
He loved his mates; but yet he could not keep,
For that a shadow lowered on the fields,
Here with the shepherds and the silly sheep.
Some life of men unblest
He knew, which made him droop, and filled his head.
He went; his piping took a troubled sound
Of storms that rage outside our happy ground;
He could not wait their passing, he is dead.

So, some tempestuous morn in early June,
When the year's primal burst of bloom is o'er,
Before the roses and the longest day —
When garden-walks and all the grassy floor
With blossoms red and white of fallen May
And chestnut-flowers are strewn —
So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vexed garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
*The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!*

Too quick despairer, wherefore wilt thou go?
Soon will the high midsummer pomps come on,
Soon will the musk carnations break and swell,
Soon shall we have gold-dusted snapdragon,
Sweet-William with his homely cottage-smell,
And stocks in fragrant blow;
Roses that down the alleys shine afar,
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

He hearkens not! light comer, he is flown!
What matters it? next year he will return,
And we shall have him in the sweet spring-days,
With whitening hedges, and uncrumpling fern,
And bluebells trembling by the forest-ways,
And scent of hay new-mown.
But Thyrsis never more we swains shall see;
See him come back, and cut a smoother reed,
And blow a strain the world at last shall heed —
For Time, not Corydon, hath conquered thee!

Alack, for Corydon no rival now! —
But when Sicilian shepherds lost a mate,
Some good survivor with his flute would go,
Piping a ditty sad for Bion's fate;
And cross the unpermitted ferry's flow,
And relax Pluto's brow,
And make leap up with joy the beauteous head
Of Proserpine, among whose crownéd hair
Are flowers first opened on Sicilian air,
And flute his friend, like Orpheus, from the dead.

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29. **gypsy-scholar.** See *The Scholar-Gypsy*, page 471, and Critical Notes. 35. **shepherd-pipes**, poetry. 36-37. **many a year . . . lost.** Arnold had not published any poetry for nine years. 40. **Thyrsis . . . away.** Clough resigned his fellowship in Oriel College, Oxford, in 1848, partly on religious grounds. 45. **silly**, simple. 49. **storms that rage.** Much of the poetry of Clough reflects his spiritual struggles.

62. **pomps**, shows, displays. 66. **stocks**, gillyflowers. 82. **Sicilian shepherds**, pastoral poets of Sicily; a reference to the lament for Bion, a Sicilian pastoral poet, written by his friend Moschus, 2d century B.C. 85. **unpermitted . . . flow**, the river Styx, over which only the dead were permitted to pass. 86. **Pluto**, god of the underworld. He is said to have carried off Proserpine to be his wife. He found her in the vale of Enna (line 95), in Sicily, where she was gathering lilies and violets. 90. **Orpheus.** See note on *Memorial Verses*, line 38, page 433.

O easy access to the hearer's grace
When Dorian shepherds sang to Proserpine!
For she herself had trod Sicilian fields,
She knew the Dorian water's gush divine,
She knew each lily white which Enna yields,
Each rose with blushing face;
She loved the Dorian pipe, the Dorian strain.
But, ah, of our poor Thames she never heard!
Her foot the Cumner cowslips never stirred;
And we should tease her with our plaint in vain!

Well! wind-dispersed and vain the words will be,
Yet, Thyrsis, let me give my grief its hour
In the old haunt, and find our tree-topped hill!
Who, if not I, for questing here hath power?
I know the wood which hides the daffodil,
I know the Fyfield tree,
I know what white, what purple fritillaries
The grassy harvest of the river-fields,
Above by Ensham, down by Sandford, yields,
And what sedged brooks are Thames's tributaries;

I know these slopes; who knows them if not I? —
But many a dingle on the loved hillside,
With thorns once studded, old, white-blossomed trees,
Where thick the cowslips grew, and far descried
High towered the spikes of purple orchises,
Hath since our day put by
The coronals of that forgotten time;
Down each green bank hath gone the plowboy's team,
And only in the hidden brookside gleam
Primroses, orphans of the flowery prime.

Where is the girl, who by the boatman's door,
Above the locks, above the boating throng,
Unmoored our skiff when through the Wytham flats,
Red loosestrife and blond meadow-sweet among
And darting swallows and light water-gnats,
We tracked the shy Thames shore?
Where are the mowers, who, as the tiny swell
Of our boat passing heaved the river-grass,
Stood with suspended scythe to see us pass? —
They all are gone, and thou art gone as well!

Yes, thou art gone! and round me too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.
I see her veil draw soft across the day,
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade
The cheek grown thin, the brown hair sprent with gray;
I feel her finger light
Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train—
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
The heart less bounding at emotion new,
And hope, once crushed, less quick to spring again.

And long the way appears, which seemed so short
To the less practiced eye of sanguine youth;
And high the mountain-tops, in cloudy air,
The mountain-tops where is the throne of Truth,
Tops in life's morning-sun so bright and bare!
Unbreachable the fort
Of the long-battered world uplifts its wall;
And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
And near and real the charm of thy repose,
And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But hush! the upland hath a sudden loss
Of quiet! — Look, adown the dusk hillside,
A troop of Oxford hunters going home,
As in old days, jovial and talking, ride!
From hunting with the Berkshire hounds they come.
Quick! let me fly, and cross
Into yon farther field! — 'Tis done; and see,
Backed by the sunset, which doth glorify
The orange and pale violet evening-sky,
Bare on its lonely ridge, the Tree! the Tree!

---

92. **Dorian,** Sicilian. 99. **Cumner,** hills near Oxford. 106. **Fyfield tree,** a giant elm near the village of Fyfield, six miles southwest of Oxford. 107. **fritillaries,** lily-like flowers. 109. **Ensham,** Eynsham, a village northwest of Oxford. Sandford is south of Oxford. 112. **dingle,** wooded dell. 123. **Wytham flats,** about two miles northwest of Oxford, between the village of Wytham and the Thames.

135. **sprent,** sprinkled. 137. **pausefully,** so as to make it pause. 155. **Berkshire,** a county south of Oxford. 160. **the Tree.** See lines 12-14.

I take the omen! Eve lets down her veil,
The white fog creeps from bush to bush about,
The west unflushes, the high stars grow bright,
And in the scattered farms the lights come out.
I cannot reach the signal-tree tonight,
Yet, happy omen, hail!
Hear it from thy broad lucent Arno-vale
(For there thine earth-forgetting eyelids keep
The morningless and unawakening sleep
Under the flowery oleanders pale),

Hear it, O Thyrsis, still our tree is there! —
Ah, vain! These English fields, this upland dim,
These brambles pale with mist engarlanded,
That lone, sky-pointing tree, are not for him;
To a boon southern country he is fled,
And now in happier air,
Wandering with the great Mother's train divine
(And purer or more subtle soul than thee,
I trow, the mighty Mother doth not see)
Within a folding of the Apennine,

Thou hearest the immortal chants of old! —
Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing;
Sings his Sicilian fold,
His sheep, his hapless love, his blinded eyes —
And how a call celestial round him rang,
And heavenward from the fountain-brink he sprang,
And all the marvel of the golden skies.

There thou art gone, and me thou leavest here
Sole in these fields! yet will I not despair.
Despair I will not, while I yet descry
'Neath the mild canopy of English air
That lonely tree against the western sky.
Still, still these slopes, 'tis clear,
Our gypsy-scholar haunts, outliving thee!
Fields where soft sheep from cages pull the hay,
Woods with anemones in flower till May,
Know him a wanderer still; then why not me?

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honor, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold —
But the smooth-slipping weeks
Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
He wends unfollowed, he must house alone;
Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Thou too, O Thyrsis, on like quest wast bound;
Thou wanderedst with me for a little hour!
Men gave thee nothing; but this happy quest,
If men esteemed thee feeble, gave thee power,
If men procured thee trouble, gave thee rest.
And this rude Cumner ground,
Its fir-topped Hurst, its farms, its quiet fields,
Here cam'st thou in thy jocund youthful time,
Here was thine height of strength, thy golden prime!
And still the haunt beloved a virtue yields.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
Lost it too soon, and learned a stormy note
Of men contention-tossed, of men who groan,
Which tasked thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat —
It failed, and thou wast mute!
Yet hadst thou alway visions of our light,
And long with men of care thou couldst not stay,
And soon thy foot resumed its wandering way,
Left human haunt, and on alone till night.

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167. **Arno.** Clough died in Italy and was buried in Florence by the Arno River. 175. **boon,** rich, benign. 177. **great Mother.** See note on *The Youth of Nature,* line 77, page 457. 183. **Phrygian king,** Lityerses, who made strangers contest with him in reaping grain. If he defeated them he put them to death. The Sicilian shepherd Daphnis (line 185), son of Hermes (messenger of the gods), engaged in such a contest in order to release his mistress, who was in the power of the king. Hercules reaped the grain for Daphnis and killed Lityerses. The Lityerses-song connected with the tradition used to be sung by Greek grain reapers. Another tradition represented Daphnis as having been blinded by a nymph whose love he slighted. His father raised Daphnis to heaven and caused a fountain to spring up in the place from which he ascended.

202. **Shy to illumine,** reluctant to shine forth. 217. **Hurst,** a prominent hill in the parish of Cumner.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bells is my home.
—Then through the great town's harsh, heart-wearying roar,
Let in thy voice a whisper often come,
To chase fatigue and fear:
*Why faintest thou? I wandered till I died.*
*Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.*
*Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,*
*Our scholar travels yet the loved hillside.*
(1866)

## SAINT BRANDAN

Saint Brandan sails the northern main;
The brotherhoods of saints are glad.
He greets them once, he sails again;
So late!—such storms!—The Saint is mad!

He heard, across the howling seas,
Chime convent-bells on wintry nights;
He saw, on spray-swept Hebrides,
Twinkle the monastery-lights.

But north, still north, Saint Brandan steered—
And now no bells, no convents more!
The hurtling Polar lights are neared,
The sea without a human shore.

At last—(it was the Christmas night;
Stars shone after a day of storm)—
He sees float past an iceberg white,
And on it—Christ!—a living form.

That furtive mien, that scowling eye,
Of hair that red and tufted fell——
It is—oh, where shall Brandan fly?—
The traitor Judas, out of hell!

Palsied with terror, Brandan sate;
The moon was bright, the iceberg near.
He hears a voice sigh humbly, "Wait!
By high permission I am here.

"One moment wait, thou holy man!
On earth my crime, my death, they knew;
My name is under all men's ban—
Ah, tell them of my respite too!

"Tell them, one blessed Christmas-night
(It was the first after I came,
Breathing self-murder, frenzy, spite,
To rue my guilt in endless flame)—

"I felt, as I in torment lay
'Mid the souls plagued by heavenly power,
An angel touch mine arm, and say,
*Go hence and cool thyself an hour!*

"'Ah, whence this mercy, Lord?' I said.
*The Leper recollect*, said he,
*Who asked the passers-by for aid,*
*In Joppa, and thy charity.*

"Then I remembered how I went,
In Joppa, through the public street,
One morn when the sirocco spent
Its storms of dust with burning heat;

"And in the street a leper sate,
Shivering with fever, naked, old;
Sand raked his sores from heel to pate,
The hot wind fevered him five-fold.

"He gazed upon me as I passed,
And murmured: *Help me, or I die!*
To the poor wretch my cloak I cast,
Saw him look eased, and hurried by.

"Oh, Brandan, think what grace divine,
What blessing must full goodness shower,
When fragment of it small, like mine,
Hath such inestimable power!

"Well-fed, well-clothed, well-friended, I
Did that chance act of good, that one!
Then went my way to kill and lie—
Forgot my good as soon as done.

"That germ of kindness, in the womb
Of mercy caught, did not expire;
Outlives my guilt, outlives my doom,
And friends me in the pit of fire.

"Once every year, when carols wake,
On earth, the Christmas-night's repose,
Arising from the sinners' lake,
I journey to these healing snows.

"I stanch with ice my burning breast,
With silence balm my whirling brain.
O Brandan! to this hour of rest
That Joppan leper's ease was pain."——

Tears started to Saint Brandan's eyes;
He bowed his head, he breathed a prayer—
Then looked, and lo, the frosty skies!
The iceberg, and no Judas there!
(1867)

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*Saint Brandan.* Saint Brandan was an Irish saint (c. 484-578) who, according to medieval tradition, went on a voyage across the Atlantic to the "Promised Land of the Saints." The legend is found in many languages.

7. **Hebrides,** islands off the west coast of Scotland. 11. **hurtling,** darting. 18. **fell,** matted hair. Judas is traditionally represented as having red hair.

40. **Joppa,** a port of Palestine on the Mediterranean, thirty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem. 43. **sirocco,** a hot south wind.

## WORLDLY PLACE

*Even in a palace, life may be led well!*
So spake the imperial sage, purest of men,
Marcus Aurelius. But the stifling den
Of common life, where, crowded up pell-mell,
Our freedom for a little bread we sell,
And drudge under some foolish master's ken
Who rates us if we peer outside our pen —
Matched with a palace, is not this a hell?
*Even in a palace!* On his truth sincere,
Who spoke these words, no shadow ever came;
And when my ill-schooled spirit is aflame
Some nobler, ampler stage of life to win,
I'll stop, and say, "There were no succor here!
The aids to noble life are all within." (1867)

## EAST LONDON

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver, through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.
I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?" —
"Bravely!" said he; "for I of late have been
Much cheered with thoughts of Christ, *the living bread.*"
O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,
To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam —
Not with lost toil thou laborest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home. (1867)

## WEST LONDON

Crouched on the pavement, close by Belgrave Square,
A tramp I saw, ill, moody, and tongue-tied.
A babe was in her arms, and at her side
A girl; their clothes were rags, their feet were bare.
Some laboring men, whose work lay somewhere there,
Passed opposite; she touched her girl, who hied
Across, and begged, and came back satisfied.
The rich she had let pass with frozen stare.
Thought I: "Above her state this spirit towers;
She will not ask of aliens, but of friends,
Of sharers in a common human fate.
She turns from that cold succor, which attends
The unknown little from the unknowing great,
And points us to a better time than ours."
(1867)

## THE BETTER PART

Long fed on boundless hopes, O race of man,
How angrily thou spurn'st all simpler fare!
"Christ," someone says, "was human as we are;
No judge eyes us from heaven, our sin to scan;
We live no more, when we have done our span." —
"Well, then, for Christ," thou answerest, "who can care?
From sin, which heaven records not, why forbear?
Live we like brutes our life without a plan!"
So answerest thou; but why not rather say:
"Hath man no second life? — *Pitch this one high!*
Sits there no judge in heaven, our sin to see?
*More strictly, then, the inward judge obey!*
Was Christ a man like us? *Ah! let us try*
*If we then, too, can be such men as he!*" (1867)

## IMMORTALITY

Foiled by our fellow-men, depressed, outworn,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, *Patience! in another life*, we say,
*The world shall be thrust down, and we upborne.*
And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn
The world's poor, routed leavings? or will they,
Who failed under the heat of this life's day,
Support the fervors of the heavenly morn?
No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagged not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing — only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.
(1867)

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*Worldly Place.* 3. **Marcus Aurelius,** a famous Roman emperor (161-180 A.D.) and philosopher; author of *Meditations,* a book highly valued by Arnold. Cf. *Meditations,* 5, 15.—"Wheresoever thou mayest live, there it is in thy power to live well and happy. But thou mayest live at the Court, there then also mayest thou live well and happy."

*East London.* 2. **Bethnal Green,** one of the poor districts of London. 4. **Spitalfields.** This is the famous district of silk-weavers; it has been the scene of numerous riots.

*West London.* 1. **Belgrave Square,** the place of residence of members of the nobility and of distinguished foreigners.

*The Better Part.* Originally called *Anti-Desperation.* 1. **boundless hopes,** as of immortality, future reward, etc.

## THE GOOD SHEPHERD WITH THE KID

*He saves the sheep, the goats he doth not save.*
So rang Tertullian's sentence, on the side
Of that unpitying Phrygian sect which cried,
"Him can no fount of fresh forgiveness lave,
Who sins, once washed by the baptismal wave." —
So spake the fierce Tertullian. But she sighed,
The infant Church! of love she felt the tide
Stream on her from her Lord's yet recent grave.
And then she smiled; and in the Catacombs,
With eye suffused but heart inspired true,
On those walls subterranean, where she hid
Her head 'mid ignominy, death, and tombs,
She her Good Shepherd's hasty image drew —
And on his shoulders, not a lamb, a kid.
(1867)

## AUSTERITY OF POETRY

That son of Italy who tried to blow,
Ere Dante came, the trump of sacred song,
In his light youth amid a festal throng
Sate with his bride to see a public show.
Fair was the bride, and on her front did glow
Youth like a star; and what to youth belong —
Gay raiment, sparkling gauds, elation strong.
A prop gave way! crash fell a platform! lo,
'Mid struggling sufferers, hurt to death, she lay!
Shuddering, they drew her garments off — and found
A robe of sackcloth next the smooth, white skin.
Such, poets, is your bride, the Muse! young, gay,
Radiant, adorned outside; a hidden ground
Of thought and of austerity within. (1867)

## DOVER BEACH

1 The sea is calm tonight,
2 The tide is full, the moon lies fair
3 Upon the straits; — on the French coast the light
4 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
5 Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
6 Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled.

not much hope, not
characteristi

But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night. (1867)

## PALLADIUM

Set where the upper streams of Simois flow
Was the Palladium, high 'mid rock and wood;
And Hector was in Ilium, far below,
And fought, and saw it not — but there it stood!

It stood, and sun and moonshine rained their light
On the pure columns of its glen-built hall.

---

*The Good Shepherd with the Kid.* 2. **Tertullian,** one of the greatest of the early Church fathers (c. 155-220). 3. **Phrygian sect,** the Montanists, a religious sect founded by Montanus, a Phrygian enthusiast of the 2d century. They held very strict views of life and advocated complete segregation of Christians from the world. 9. **Catacombs,** underground tombs used as a place of burial and also of refuge by the early Christians in Rome.

*Austerity of Poetry.* 1. **son of Italy,** Giacopone di Todi, a poet of the 13th century. Upon the death of his bride, as related in the poem, he became a Franciscan monk.

*Dover Beach.* 15. **Sophocles,** the famous Greek tragic dramatist of the 4th century B.C. The reference is to a passage in *Antigone,* 583 ff. 28. **shingles,** beaches covered with shingles, or large stones. 29-37. **Ah, love . . . night.** Cf. *The Buried Life,* lines 79-98, page 453.

*Palladium.* The Palladium was a statue of Pallas Athena, goddess of wisdom, which was supposed to have fallen from heaven when the city of Troy (Ilium, line 3) was being built, and upon which the safety of the city depended. The statue was stolen by the Greeks, and the city then fell.

1. **Simois,** one of the two rivers of Troy; the other was Xanthus (line 14). 3. **Hector,** son of King Priam of Troy and the city's greatest hero.

Backward and forward rolled the waves of fight
Round Troy — but while this stood, Troy could not fall.

So, in its lovely moonlight, lives the soul.
Mountains surround it, and sweet virgin air;
Cold plashing, past it, crystal waters roll;
We visit it by moments, ah, too rare!

We shall renew the battle in the plain
Tomorrow; — red with blood will Xanthus be;
Hector and Ajax will be there again,
Helen will come upon the wall to see.

Then we shall rust in shade, or shine in strife,
And fluctuate 'twixt blind hopes and blind despairs,
And fancy that we put forth all our life,
And never know how with the soul it fares.

Still doth the soul, from its lone fastness high,
Upon our life a ruling effluence send.
And when it fails, fight as we will, we die;
And while it lasts, we cannot wholly end.
(1867)

## YOUTH AND CALM

'Tis death! and peace, indeed, is here,
And ease from shame, and rest from fear.
There's nothing can dismarble now
The smoothness of that limpid brow.
But is a calm like this, in truth,
The crowning end of life and youth,
And when this boon rewards the dead,
Are all debts paid, has all been said?
And is the heart of youth so light,
Its step so firm, its eyes so bright,
Because on its hot brow there blows
A wind of promise and repose
From the far grave, to which it goes;
Because it hath the hope to come,
One day, to harbor in the tomb?
Ah no, the bliss youth dreams is one
For daylight, for the cheerful sun,
For feeling nerves and living breath —
Youth dreams a bliss on this side death.
It dreams a rest, if not more deep,
More grateful than this marble sleep;
It hears a voice within it tell:
*Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well.*
'Tis all perhaps which man acquires,
But 'tis not what our youth desires.
(1867)

## GROWING OLD

What is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The luster of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
—Yes, but not this alone.

Is it to feel our strength —
Not our bloom only, but our strength — decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung?

Yes, this, and more; but not,
Ah, 'tis not what in youth we dreamed 'twould be!
'Tis not to have our life
Mellowed and softened as with sunset-glow,
A golden day's decline.

'Tis not to see the world
As from a height, with rapt prophetic eyes,
And heart profoundly stirred;
And weep, and feel the fullness of the past,
The years that are no more.

It is to spend long days
And not once feel that we were ever young;
It is to add, immured
In the hot prison of the present, month
To month with weary pain.

It is to suffer this,
And feel but half, and feebly, what we feel.
Deep in our hidden heart
Festers the dull remembrance of a change,
But no emotion — none.

It is — last stage of all —
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of ourselves,
To hear the world applaud the hollow ghost
Which blamed the living man.
(1867)

## THE PROGRESS OF POESY

### A VARIATION

Youth rambles on life's arid mount,
And strikes the rock, and finds the vein,
And brings the water from the fount,
The fount which shall not flow again.

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15. **Ajax**, a famous Greek hero. 16. **Helen**, wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. She was carried off by Paris, brother of Hector, and thus became the cause of the Trojan War.

*Growing Old.* Cf. Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, page 280.
*The Progress of Poesy.* 2. **strikes the rock**, a reference to Moses, who secured water for the Israelites by smiting a rock on Mt. Horeb. (See *Exodus*, 17:1-6.)

The man mature with labor chops
For the bright stream a channel grand,
And sees not that the sacred drops
Ran off and vanished out of hand.

And then the old man totters nigh,
And feebly rakes among the stones.
The mount is mute, the channel dry;
And down he lays his weary bones. (1867)

## PERSISTENCY OF POETRY

Though the Muse be gone away,
Though she move not earth today,
Souls, erewhile who caught her word,
Ah! still harp on what they heard. (1867)

## A CAUTION TO POETS

What poets feel not, when they make,
  A pleasure in creating,
The world, in *its* turn, will not take
  Pleasure in contemplating. (1867)

## THE LAST WORD

Creep into thy narrow bed,
Creep, and let no more be said!
Vain thy onset! all stands fast.
Thou thyself must break at last.

Let the long contention cease!
Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
Let them have it how they will!
Thou art tired; best be still.

They out-talked thee, hissed thee, tore thee?
Better men fared thus before thee;
Fired their ringing shot and passed,
Hotly charged — and sank at last.

Charge once more, then, and be dumb!
Let the victors, when they come,
When the forts of folly fall,
Find thy body by the wall! (1867)

## PIS-ALLER

"Man is blind because of sin;
Revelation makes him sure.
Without that, who looks within,
Looks in vain, for all's obscure."

Nay, look closer into man!
Tell me, can you find indeed
Nothing sure, no moral plan
Clear prescribed, without your creed?

"No, I nothing can perceive!
Without that, all's dark for men.
That, or nothing, I believe." —
For God's sake, believe it then! (1867)

## A WISH

I ask not that my bed of death
From bands of greedy heirs be free;
For these besiege the latest breath
Of fortune's favored sons, not me.

I ask not each kind soul to keep
Tearless, when of my death he hears.
Let those who will, if any, weep!
There are worse plagues on earth than tears.

I ask but that my death may find
The freedom to my life denied;
Ask but the folly of mankind
Then, then at last, to quit my side.

Spare me the whispering, crowded room,
The friends who come, and gape, and go;
The ceremonious air of gloom —
All which makes death a hideous show!

Nor bring, to see me cease to live,
Some doctor full of phrase and fame,
To shake his sapient head, and give
The ill he cannot cure a name.

Nor fetch, to take the accustomed toll
Of the poor sinner bound for death,
His brother-doctor of the soul,
To canvass with official breath

The future and its viewless things —
That undiscovered mystery
Which one who feels death's winnowing wings
Must needs read clearer, sure, than he!

Bring none of these; but let me be,
While all around in silence lies,
Moved to the window near, and see
Once more, before my dying eyes,

Bathed in the sacred dews of morn
The wide aerial landscape spread —
The world which was ere I was born,
The world which lasts when I am dead;

Which never was the friend of *one*,
Nor promised love it could not give,
But lit for all its generous sun,
And lived itself, and made us live.

*The Last Word.* 16. **body . . . wall**, where it fell in attacking the forts of folly.

*Pis-Aller.* The title means *A Last Resource.*

There let me gaze, till I become
In soul, with what I gaze on, wed!
To feel the universe my home;
To have before my mind — instead

Of the sick room, the mortal strife,
The turmoil for a little breath —
The pure eternal course of life,
Not human combatings with death!

Thus feeling, gazing, might I grow
Composed, refreshed, ennobled, clear;
Then willing let my spirit go
To work or wait elsewhere or here! (1867)

## BACCHANALIA;

### OR, THE NEW AGE

1

The evening comes, the fields are still.
The tinkle of the thirsty rill,
Unheard all day, ascends again;
Deserted is the half-mown plain,
Silent the swaths! the ringing wain,
The mower's cry, the dog's alarms,
All housed within the sleeping farms!
The business of the day is done,
The last-left haymaker is gone.
And from the thyme upon the height,
And from the elder-blossom white
And pale dog-roses in the hedge,
And from the mint-plant in the sedge,
In puffs of balm the night-air blows
The perfume which the day forgoes.
And on the pure horizon far,
See, pulsing with the first-born star,
The liquid sky above the hill!
The evening comes, the fields are still.
Loitering and leaping,
With saunter, with bounds —
Flickering and circling
In files and in rounds —
Gayly their pine-staff green
Tossing in air,
Loose o'er their shoulders white
Showering their hair —
See! the wild Mænads
Break from the wood,
Youth and Iacchus
Maddening their blood.
See! through the quiet land
Rioting they pass —
Fling the fresh heaps about,
Trample the grass,
Tear from the rifled hedge
Garlands, their prize;
Fill with their sports the field,
Fill with their cries.

Shepherd, what ails thee, then?
Shepherd, why mute?
Forth with thy joyous song!
Forth with thy flute!
Tempts not the revel blithe?
Lure not their cries?
Glow not their shoulders smooth?
Melt not their eyes?
Is not, on cheeks like those,
Lovely the flush?
*—Ah, so the quiet was!*
*So was the hush!*

2

The epoch ends, the world is still.
The age has talked and worked its fill —
The famous orators have shone,
The famous poets sung and gone,
The famous men of war have fought,
The famous speculators thought,
The famous players, sculptors, wrought,
The famous painters filled their wall,
The famous critics judged it all.
The combatants are parted now —
Uphung the spear, unbent the bow,
The puissant crowned, the weak laid low.
And in the after-silence sweet,
Now strifes are hushed, our ears doth meet,
Ascending pure, the bell-like fame
Of this or that down-trodden name,
Delicate spirits, pushed away
In the hot press of the noon-day.
And o'er the plain, where the dead age
Did its now silent warfare wage —
O'er that wide plain, now wrapped in gloom,
Where many a splendor finds its tomb,
Many spent fames and fallen mights —
The one or two immortal lights
Rise slowly up into the sky
To shine there everlastingly,
Like stars over the bounding hill.
The epoch ends, the world is still.

Thundering and bursting
In torrents, in waves —
Caroling and shouting
Over tombs, amid graves —
See! on the cumbered plain
Clearing a stage,
Scattering the past about,
Comes the new age.
Bards make new poems,
Thinkers new schools,

---

*Bacchanalia.* The title indicates a festival or revelry of Bacchus, god of wine.

5. **ringing wain**, wagon with bells. 28. **Mænads**, priestesses of Bacchus. The name is derived from a Greek word meaning *to be frenzied*. 30. **Iacchus**, another name for Bacchus.

78. **bounding hill**, hill that bounds or marks the horizon.

Statesmen new systems,
Critics new rules.
All things begin again;
Life is their prize;
Earth with their deeds they fill,
Fill with their cries.

Poet, what ails thee, then?
Say, why so mute?
Forth with thy praising voice!
Forth with thy flute!
Loiterer! why sittest thou
Sunk in thy dream?
Tempts not the bright new age?
Shines not its stream?
Look, ah, what genius,
Art, science, wit!
Soldiers like Cæsar,
Statesmen like Pitt!
Sculptors like Phidias,
Raphaels in shoals,
Poets like Shakespeare —
Beautiful souls!
See, on their glowing cheeks
Heavenly the flush!
*—Ah, so the silence was!*
*So was the hush!*

The world but feels the present's spell,
The poet feels the past as well;
Whatever men have done, might do,
Whatever thought, might think it too. (1867)

## RUGBY CHAPEL

### NOVEMBER, 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace,
Silent — hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the schoolroom windows; — but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigor, again;
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of by-gone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practiced that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live —
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,

Sternly repressest the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest! — this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

reflective

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth? —
Most men eddy about
Here and there — eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die —
Perish; — and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,
Foamed for a moment, and gone.

---

107. **Pitt,** William Pitt (1708-78), a famous British statesman. 108. **Phidias,** the greatest of Athenian sculptors (4th century B.C.) 109. **Raphael** (1483-1520), one of the greatest of the Italian painters.

*Rugby Chapel.* This poem was written in memory of the poet's father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby School. He died suddenly in June, 1842, and was buried in the College Chapel.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah, yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path —
Path to a clear-purposed goal,
Path of advance! — but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breached
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep — the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin; alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs —
Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

T. Arnold / Father

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.
And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honored and blessed
By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seemed but a dream of the heart,
Seemed but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me today
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? — A God
Marshaled them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.

---

79-84. Cf. Horace, *Odes*, III, 30: "I shall not all die; and of me many a portion shall unharmed flee from Libitina." 110. **host,** probably Time, or Death.

148. **who else,** etc., who, but for what I have known of thee, would have seemed a dream. 162. **Servants . . . sons.** Cf. *John*, 1:12.—"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

—Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else, of the myriads who fill
That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
Stagger forever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardor divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave!
Order, courage, return.
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God. (1867)

## OBERMANN ONCE MORE

*Savez-vous quelque bien qui console du regret d'un monde?* — OBERMANN.

Glion? —— Ah, twenty years, it cuts
All meaning from a name!
White houses prank where once were huts.
Glion, but not the same!

And yet I know not! All unchanged
The turf, the pines, the sky!
The hills in their old order ranged;
The lake, with Chillon by!

And, 'neath those chestnut-trees, where stiff
And stony mounts the way,
The crackling husk-heaps burn, as if
I left them yesterday!

Across the valley, on that slope,
The huts of Avant shine!
Its pines, under their branches, ope
Ways for the pasturing kine.

Full-foaming milk-pails, Alpine fare,
Sweet heaps of fresh-cut grass,
Invite to rest the traveler there
Before he climb the pass —

The gentian-flowered pass, its crown
With yellow spires aflame;
Whence drops the path to Allière down,
And walls where Byron came,

By their green river, who doth change
His birth-name just below;
Orchard, and croft, and full-stored grange
Nursed by his pastoral flow.

But stop! — to fetch back thoughts that stray
Beyond this gracious bound,
The cone of Jaman, pale and gray,
See, in the blue profound!

Ah, Jaman! delicately tall
Above his sun-warmed firs —
What thoughts to me his rocks recall,
What memories he stirs!

And who but thou must be, in truth,
Obermann! with me here?
Thou master of my wandering youth,
But left this many a year!

Yes, I forget the world's work wrought,
Its warfare waged with pain;
An eremite with thee, in thought
Once more I slip my chain,

And to thy mountain-chalet come,
And lie beside its door,
And hear the wild bee's Alpine hum,
And thy sad, tranquil lore!

Again I feel the words inspire
Their mournful calm; serene,
Yet tinged with infinite desire
For all that *might* have been —

The harmony from which man swerved
Made his life's rule once more!
The universal order served,
Earth happier than before!

—While thus I mused, night gently ran
Down over hill and wood.
Then, still and sudden, Obermann
On the grass near me stood.

---

190. **Ye,** the servants of God of line 162.

*Obermann Once More.* See introductory note to *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann,"* page 453. This poem presents a review of the world's spiritual history beginning with the Christian era. The quotation from Obermann may be translated thus: Do you know anything that consoles regret for a lost world?

1. **Glion,** a mountain village above Lake Geneva, Switzerland. 3. **prank,** adorn. 8. **Chillon,** the Castle of Chillon. 14. **Avant,** a village opposite Glion.

20. **the pass,** the Col de Jaman. 23. **Allière,** a district at the foot of the mountain. 24. **walls . . . came,** Montbovon, a town visited by Byron. 25-26. **change . . . birth-name,** the River Saane, which becomes the Savine below Montbovon. 27. **croft,** a small piece of enclosed ground. 31. **Jaman,** a peak that rises above the pass. 43. **eremite,** hermit.

Those pensive features well I knew,
On my mind, years before,
Imaged so oft! imaged so true!
—A shepherd's garb he wore,

A mountain-flower was in his hand,
A book was in his breast.
Bent on my face, with gaze which scanned
My soul, his eyes did rest.

"And is it thou," he cried, "so long
Held by the world which we
Loved not, who turnest from the throng
Back to thy youth and me?

"And from thy world, with heart opprest,
Choosest thou *now* to turn? —
Ah me! we anchorites read things best,
Clearest their course discern!

"Thou fledst me when the ungenial earth,
Man's work-place, lay in gloom.
Return'st thou in her hour of birth,
Of hopes and hearts in bloom?

"Perceiv'st thou not the change of day?
Ah! Carry back thy ken,
What, some two thousand years! Survey
The world as it was then!

"Like ours it looked in outward air.
Its head was clear and true,
Sumptuous its clothing, rich its fare,
No pause its action knew;

"Stout was its arm, each thew and bone
Seemed puissant and alive —
But, ah! its heart, its heart was stone,
And so it could not thrive!

"On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

"In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The Roman noble lay;
He drove abroad, in furious guise,
Along the Appian way.

"He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,
And crowned his hair with flowers —
No easier nor no quicker passed
The impracticable hours.

"The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world.
The Roman tempest swelled and swelled,
And on her head was hurled.

"The East bowed low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.

"So well she mused, a morning broke
Across her spirit gray;
A conquering, new-born joy awoke,
And filled her life with day.

" 'Poor world,' she cried, 'so deep accurst,
That runn'st from pole to pole
To seek a draft to slake thy thirst —
Go, seek it in thy soul!'

"She heard it, the victorious West,
In crown and sword arrayed!
She felt the void which mined her breast,
She shivered and obeyed.

"She veiled her eagles, snapped her sword,
And laid her scepter down;
Her stately purple she abhorred,
And her imperial crown.

"She broke her flutes, she stopped her sports,
Her artists could not please;
She tore her books, she shut her courts,
She fled her palaces;

"Lust of the eye and pride of life
She left it all behind,
And hurried, torn with inward strife,
The wilderness to find.

"Tears washed the trouble from her face!
She changed into a child!
'Mid weeds and wrecks she stood — a place
Of ruin — but she smiled!

"Oh, had I lived in that great day,
How had its glory new
Filled earth and heaven, and caught away
My ravished spirit too!

"No thoughts that to the world belong
Had stood against the wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
From Christ's then open grave.

"No cloister-floor of humid stone
Had been too cold for me.
For me no Eastern desert lone
Had been too far to flee.

"No lonely life had passed too slow,
When I could hourly scan

---

75. **anchorites,** religious hermits. 100. **Appian way,** a famous thoroughfare from Rome to Brundusium. It was begun by Appius Claudius in the 3d century B.C. 104. **impracticable hours,** hours that produced no real achievement.

Upon his Cross, with head sunk low,
That nailed, thorn-crownéd Man!

"Could see the Mother with her Child
Whose tender winning arts
Have to his little arms beguiled
So many wounded hearts!

"And centuries came and ran their course,
And unspent all that time
Still, still went forth that Child's dear force,
And still was at its prime.

"Aye, ages long endured his span
Of life — 'tis true received —
That gracious Child, that thorn-crowned Man!
— He lived while we believed.

"While we believed, on earth he went,
And open stood his grave.
Men called from chamber, church, and tent;
And Christ was by to save.

"Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

"In vain men still, with hoping new,
Regard his death-place dumb,
And say the stone is not yet to,
And wait for words to come.

"Ah, o'er that silent sacred land,
Of sun, and arid stone,
And crumbling wall, and sultry sand,
Sounds now one word alone!

"*Unduped of fancy, henceforth man*
*Must labor! — must resign*
*His all too human creeds, and scan*
*Simply the way divine!*

"But slow that tide of common thought,
Which bathed our life, retired;
Slow, slow the old world wore to naught,
And pulse by pulse expired.

"Its frame yet stood without a breach
When blood and warmth were fled;
And still it spake its wonted speech —
But every word was dead.

"And oh, we cried, that on this corse
Might fall a freshening storm!
Rive its dry bones, and with new force
A new-sprung world inform!

"— Down came the storm! O'er France it passed
In sheets of scathing fire;
All Europe felt that fiery blast,
And shook as it rushed by her.

"Down came the storm! In ruins fell
The worn-out world we knew.
It passed, that elemental swell!
Again appeared the blue;

"The sun shone in the new-washed sky,
And what from heaven saw he?
Blocks of the past, like icebergs high,
Float on a rolling sea!

"Upon them plies the race of man
All it before endeavored;
'Ye live,' I cried, 'ye work and plan,
And know not ye are severed!

" 'Poor fragments of a broken world
Whereon men pitch their tent!
Why were ye too to death not hurled
When your world's day was spent?

" 'That glow of central fire is done
Which with its fusing flame
Knit all your parts, and kept you one —
But ye, ye are the same!

" 'The past, its mask of union on,
Had ceased to live and thrive.
The past, its mask of union gone,
Say, is it more alive?

" 'Your creeds are dead, your rites are dead,
Your social order too!
Where tarries he, the Power who said:
*See, I make all things new?*

" 'The millions suffer still, and grieve,
And what can helpers heal
With old-world cures men half believe
For woes they wholly feel?

" 'And yet men have such need of joy!
But joy whose grounds are true;
And joy that should all hearts employ
As when the past was new.

" 'Ah, not the emotion of that past,
Its common hope, were vain!
Some new such hope must dawn at last,
Or man must toss in pain.

---

174. **lorn,** desolate. **Syrian town,** Jerusalem. 179. **not yet to,** not yet closed.

201. **the storm,** a reference to the French Revolution. 207. **elemental swell,** an intellectual outburst as strong as the power of the elements of nature. 216. **severed,** separated by a difference in religious beliefs. 225. **mask of union.** The union was apparent only. 232. **See . . . new.** From *Revelation,* 21:5.—"And he that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"

" 'But now the old is out of date,
The new is not yet born,
And who can be *alone* elate,
While the world lies forlorn?'

"Then to the wilderness I fled.—
There among Alpine snows
And pastoral huts I hid my head,
And sought and found repose.

"It was not yet the appointed hour.
Sad, patient, and resigned,
I watched the crocus fade and flower,
I felt the sun and wind.

"The day I lived in was not mine,
Man gets no second day.
In dreams I saw the future shine—
But ah! I could not stay!

"Action I had not, followers, fame;
I passed obscure, alone.
The after-world forgets my name,
Nor do I wish it known.

"Composed to bear, I lived and died,
And knew my life was vain,
With fate I murmur not, nor chide.
At Sèvres by the Seine

"(If Paris that brief flight allow)
My humble tomb explore!
It bears: *Eternity, be thou*
*My refuge!* and no more.

"But thou, whom fellowship of mood
Did make from haunts of strife
Come to my mountain-solitude,
And learn my frustrate life;

"O thou, who, ere thy flying span
Was past of cheerful youth,
Didst find the solitary man
And love his cheerless truth—

"Despair not thou as I despaired,
Nor be cold gloom thy prison!
Forward the gracious hours have fared,
And see! the sun is risen!

"He breaks the winter of the past;
A green, new earth appears.
Millions, whose life in ice lay fast,
Have thoughts, and smiles, and tears.

"What though there still need effort, strife?
Though much be still unwon?
Yet warm it mounts, the hour of life!
Death's frozen hour is done!

"The world's great order dawns in sheen,
After long darkness rude,
Divinelier imaged, clearer seen,
With happier zeal pursued.

"With hope extinct and brow composed
I marked the present die;
Its term of life was nearly closed,
Yet it had more than I.

"But thou, though to the world's new hour
Thou come with aspect marred,
Shorn of the joy, the bloom, the power
Which best befits its bard—

"Though more than half thy years be past,
And spent thy youthful prime;
Though, round thy firmer manhood cast,
Hang weeds of our sad time

"Whereof thy youth felt all the spell,
And traversed all the shade—
Though late, though dimmed, though weak, yet tell
Hope to a world new-made!

"Help it to fill that deep desire,
The want which racked our brain,
Consumed our heart with thirst like fire,
Immedicable pain;

"Which to the wilderness drove out
Our life, to Alpine snow,
And palsied all our word with doubt,
And all our work with woe—

"What still of strength is left, employ
That end to help attain:
*One common wave of thought and joy*
*Lifting mankind again!*"

—The vision ended. I awoke
As out of sleep, and no
Voice moved—only the torrent broke
The silence, far below.

Soft darkness on the turf did lie.
Solemn, o'er hut and wood,
In the yet star-sown nightly sky,
The peak of Jaman stood.

Still in my soul the voice I heard
Of Obermann!—away
I turned; by some vague impulse stirred,
Along the rocks of Naye

Past Sonchaud's piny flanks I gaze
And the blanched summit bare

---

268. **Sèvres,** a suburb of Paris, on the Seine River.

336. **rocks of Naye,** the Rochers de Naye at the east end of Lake Geneva. 337. **Sonchaud.** Sonchaud and Malatrait (line 339) are mountainous sections east of Lake Geneva.

Of Malatrait, to where in haze
The Valais opens fair,

And the domed Velan, with his snows,
Behind the upcrowding hills,
Doth all the heavenly opening close
Which the Rhone's murmur fills —

And glorious there, without a sound,
Across the glimmering lake,
High in the Valais-depth profound,
I saw the morning break. (1867)

## HEINE'S GRAVE

"*Henri Heine*" — 'tis here!
That black tombstone, the name
Carved there — no more! and the smooth
Swarded alleys, the limes
Touched with yellow by hot
Summer, but under them still,
In September's bright afternoon,
Shadow, and verdure, and cool.
Trim Montmartre! the faint
Murmur of Paris outside;
Crisp everlasting-flowers,
Yellow and black, on the graves.

Half blind, palsied, in pain,
Hither to come, from the streets'
Uproar, surely not loath
Wast thou, Heine! — to lie
Quiet, to ask for closed
Shutters, and darkened room,
And cool drinks, and an eased
Posture, and opium, no more;
Hither to come, and to sleep
Under the wings of Renown.

Ah! not little, when pain
Is most quelling, and man
Easily quelled, and the fine
Temper of genius so soon
Thrills at each smart, is the praise,
Not to have yielded to pain!
No small boast, for a weak
Son of mankind, to the earth
Pinned by the thunder, to rear
His bolt-scathed front to the stars;
And, undaunted, retort
'Gainst thick-crashing, insane,
Tyrannous tempests of bale,
Arrowy lightnings of soul.

Hark! through the alley resounds
Mocking laughter! A film
Creeps o'er the sunshine; a breeze
Ruffles the warm afternoon,
Saddens my soul with its chill.
Gibing of spirits in scorn
Shakes every leaf of the grove,
Mars the benignant repose
Of this amiable home of the dead.

Bitter spirits, ye claim
Heine? — Alas, he is yours!
Only a moment I longed
Here in the quiet to snatch
From such mates the outworn
Poet, and steep him in calm.
Only a moment! I knew
Whose he was who is here
Buried — I knew he was yours!
Ah, I knew that I saw
Here no sepulcher built
In the laureled rock, o'er the blue
Naples bay, for a sweet
Tender Virgil! no tomb
On Ravenna sands, in the shade
Of Ravenna pines, for a high
Austere Dante! no grave
By the Avon side, in the bright
Stratford meadows, for thee,
Shakespeare! loveliest of souls,
Peerless in radiance, in joy.

What, then, so harsh and malign,
Heine! distills from thy life?
Poisons the peace of thy grave?

I chide with thee not, that thy sharp
Upbraidings often assailed
England, my country — for we,
Heavy and sad, for her sons,
Long since, deep in our hearts,
Echo the blame of her foes.
We, too, sigh that she flags;
We, too, say that she now —
Scarce comprehending the voice
Of her greatest, golden-mouthed sons
Of a former age any more —
Stupidly travels her round
Of mechanic business, and lets
Slow die out of her life
Glory, and genius, and joy.

So thou arraign'st her, her foe;
So we arraign her, her sons.

---

340. **Valais**, the Swiss canton on either side of the Rhone above Lake Geneva. 341. **Velan**, a high peak in the Alps.

*Heine's Grave.* Heinrich Heine (1797-1856), the famous German poet, lived in Paris from 1831 to the end of his life. During his last eight years he suffered from a spinal disease that made him helpless. He was buried in the cemetery of Montmartre in Paris.

32. **bolt-scathed**, wounded by a thunderbolt.

57. **laureled rock.** Virgil was buried in a monument on the road from Naples. 60. **Ravenna sands.** Dante was buried at Ravenna. 63. **Avon side.** Shakespeare was buried in Stratford on the River Avon. 71. **Upbraidings.** Heine visited England in 1827 and strongly disapproved of the commercial and religious life of the country.

Yes, we arraign her! but she,
The weary Titan, with deaf
Ears, and labor-dimmed eyes,
Regarding neither to right
Nor left, goes passively by,
Staggering on to her goal;
Bearing on shoulders immense,
Atlanteän, the load,
Wellnigh not to be borne,
Of the too vast orb of her fate.

But was it thou — I think
Surely it was! — that bard
Unnamed, who, Goethe said,
*Had every other gift, but wanted love;*
Love, without which the tongue
Even of angels sounds amiss?

Charm is the glory which makes
Song of the poet divine;
Love is the fountain of charm.
How without charm wilt thou draw,
Poet! the world to thy way?
Not by the lightnings of wit —
Not by the thunder of scorn!
These to the world, too, are given;
Wit it possesses, and scorn —
Charm is the poet's alone.
*Hollow and dull are the great,*
*And artists envious, and the mob profane.*
We know all this, we know!
Cam'st thou from heaven, O child
Of light! but this to declare?
Alas, to help us forget
Such barren knowledge awhile,
God gave the poet his song!

Therefore a secret unrest
Tortured thee, brilliant and bold!
Therefore triumph itself
Tasted amiss to thy soul.
Therefore, with blood of thy foes,
Trickled in silence thine own.
Therefore the victor's heart
Broke on the field of his fame.

Ah! as of old, from the pomp
Of Italian Milan, the fair
Flower of marble of white
Southern palaces — steps
Bordered by statues, and walks
Terraced, and orange-bowers
Heavy with fragrance — the blond
German Kaiser full oft
Longed himself back to the fields,
Rivers, and high-roofed towns
Of his native Germany; so,
So, how often! from hot
Paris drawing-rooms, and lamps
Blazing, and brilliant crowds,
Starred and jeweled, of men
Famous, of women the queens
Of dazzling converse — from fumes
Of praise, hot, heady fumes, to the poor brain
That mount, that madden — how oft
Heine's spirit outworn
Longed itself out of the din,
Back to the tranquil, the cool
Far German home of his youth!

See! in the May afternoon,
O'er the fresh, short turf of the Hartz.
A youth, with the foot of youth,
Heine! thou climbest again!
Up, through the tall dark firs
Warming their heads in the sun,
Checkering the grass with their shade —
Up, by the stream, with its huge
Moss-hung boulders, and thin
Musical water half-hid —
Up, o'er the rock-strewn slope,
With the sinking sun, and the air
Chill, and the shadows now
Long on the gray hillside —
To the stone-roofed hut at the top!

Or, yet later, in watch
On the roof of the Brocken-tower
Thou standest, gazing! — to see
The broad red sun, over field,
Forest, and city, and spire,
And mist-tracked stream of the wide,
Wide German land, going down
In a bank of vapors — again
Standest, at nightfall, alone!

Or, next morning, with limbs
Rested by slumber, and heart
Freshened and light with the May,
O'er the gracious spurs coming down
Of the Lower Hartz, among oaks,
And beechen coverts, and copse
Of hazels green in whose depth
Ilse, the fairy transformed,
In a thousand water-breaks light
Pours her petulant youth —
Climbing the rock which juts
O'er the valley, the dizzily perched
Rock — to its iron cross

---

88. **Titan.** The Titans were superhuman beings of great size who rebelled against the gods. 94. **Atlanteän,** so called from Atlas, the mythological giant who supported the world on his shoulders. 135-136. **blond . . . Kaiser,** probably Frederick Barbarossa (1123?-1190), Holy Roman Emperor, who was a German by birth. He captured Milan in 1158. He is said to have had flowing yellow hair and a reddish beard.

141. **Paris.** Heine wrote a series of essays on the salons of Paris. 152-190. The thought of these lines follows Heine's description of his tour of the Hartz Mountains in central Germany as recorded in his *Die Harzreise.* 168. **Brocken-tower,** in the Hartz Mountains. 183. **Ilse,** a river in the Hartz Mountains. 184. **water-breaks,** ripples. 188. **iron cross,** a cross erected on the granite peak Ilstenstein by Count Anton von Stolberg-Wernigerode in memory of his friends killed in the wars of 1813-15.

Once more thou cling'st; to the Cross
Clingest! with smiles, with a sigh!

Goethe, too, had been there.
In the long-past winter he came
To the frozen Hartz, with his soul
Passionate, eager — his youth
All in ferment! — but he
Destined to work and to live
Left it, and thou, alas!
Only to laugh and to die.

But something prompts me: Not thus
Take leave of Heine! not thus
Speak the last word at his grave!
Not in pity, and not
With half censure — with awe
Hail, as it passes from earth
Scattering lightnings, that soul!

The Spirit of the world,
Beholding the absurdity of men —
Their vaunts, their feats — let a sardonic smile,
For one short moment, wander o'er his lips.
*That smile was Heine!* — for its earthly hour
The strange guest sparkled; now 'tis passed away.

That was Heine! and we,
Myriads who live, who have lived,
What are we all, but a mood,
A single mood, of the life
Of the Spirit in whom we exist,
Who alone is all things in one?

Spirit, who fillest us all!
Spirit, who utterest in each
New-coming son of mankind
Such of thy thoughts as thou wilt!
O thou, one of whose moods,
Bitter and strange, was the life
Of Heine — his strange, alas,
His bitter life! — may a life
Other and milder be mine!
May'st thou a mood more serene,
Happier, have uttered in mine!
May'st thou the rapture of peace
Deep have embreathed at its core;
Made it a ray of thy thought,
Made it a beat of thy joy!
(1867)

## GEIST'S GRAVE

Four years! — and didst thou stay above
The ground, which hides thee now, but four?
And all that life, and all that love,
Were crowded, Geist! into no more?

Only four years those winning ways,
Which make me for thy presence yearn,
Called us to pet thee or to praise,
Dear little friend! at every turn?

That loving heart, that patient soul,
Had they indeed no longer span,
To run their course, and reach their goal,
And read their homily to man?

That liquid, melancholy eye,
From whose pathetic, soul-fed springs
Seemed surging the Virgilian cry,
The sense of tears in mortal things —

That steadfast, mournful strain, consoled
By spirits gloriously gay,
And temper of heroic mold —
What, was four years their whole short day?

Yes, only four! — and not the course
Of all the centuries yet to come,
And not the infinite resource
Of Nature, with her countless sum

Of figures, with her fullness vast
Of new creation evermore,
Can ever quite repeat the past,
Or just thy little self restore.

Stern law of every mortal lot!
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself I know not what
Of second life I know not where.

But thou, when struck thine hour to go,
On us, who stood despondent by,
A meek last glance of love didst throw,
And humbly lay thee down to die.

Yet would we keep thee in our heart —
Would fix our favorite on the scene,
Nor let thee utterly depart
And be as if thou ne'er hadst been.

And so there rise these lines of verse
On lips that rarely form them now;
While to each other we rehearse:
*Such ways, such arts, such looks hadst thou!*

We stroke thy broad brown paws again,
We bid thee to thy vacant chair,
We greet thee by the window-pane,
We hear thy scuffle on the stair.

We see the flaps of thy large ears
Quick raised to ask which way we go;

---

*Geist's Grave.* Geist was a dachshund much loved by the Arnold family.

15. **Virgilian cry,** *Sunt lacrymae rerum*—"*There is sadness in human affairs*" (from the *Æneid,* 1, 462).

Crossing the frozen lake, appears
Thy small black figure on the snow:

Nor to us only art thou dear
Who mourn thee in thine English home;
Thou hast thine absent master's tear,
Dropped by the far Australian foam.

Thy memory lasts both here and there,
And thou shalt live as long as we.
And after that — thou dost not care!
In us was all the world to thee.

Yet, fondly zealous for thy fame,
Even to a date beyond our own
We strive to carry down thy name,
By mounded turf and graven stone.

We lay thee, close within our reach,
Here, where the grass is smooth and warm,
Between the holly and the beech,
Where oft we watched thy couchant form,

Asleep, yet lending half an ear
To travelers on the Portsmouth road —
There build we thee, O guardian dear,
Marked with a stone, thy last abode!

Then some, who through this garden pass,
When we too, like thyself, are clay,
Shall see thy grave upon the grass,
And stop before the stone, and say:

*People who lived here long ago*
*Did by this stone, it seems, intend*
*To name for future times to know*
*The dachshund, Geist, their little friend.* (1881)

## WILLIAM ALLINGHAM (1824-1889)

### THE FAIRIES

A CHILD'S SONG

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men:
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home —
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain-lake,
With frogs for their watchdogs,
All night awake.

High on the hilltop
The old King sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses;
Or going up with music
On cold starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back,
Between the night and morrow;
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hillside,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig one up in spite,
He shall find the thornies set
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men:
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather! (1850)

### A DREAM

I heard the dogs howl in the moonlight night;
I went to the window to see the sight;
All the Dead that ever I knew
Going one by one and two by two.

---

55. **absent master,** Arnold's son Richard, who was in Australia when the dog died. 70. **Portsmouth road.** Arnold lived in the parish of Cobham, Surrey, on the road from London to Portsmouth.

*The Fairies.* 22. **Columbkill,** Iona, a sacred island off the west coast of Scotland where the ancient Scotch kings were buried. 24. **Slieveleague,** a mountain on the coast of Donegal, Ireland. **Rosses,** a promontory on the Isle of Mull off the west coast of Scotland, near Iona.

On they passed, and on they passed;
Townsfellows all, from first to last;
Born in the moonlight of the lane,
Quenched in the heavy shadow again.

Schoolmates, marching as when we played
At soldiers once — but now more staid;
Those were the strangest sight to me
Who were drowned, I knew, in the awful sea.

Straight and handsome folk; bent and weak, too;
Some that I loved, and gasped to speak to;
Some but a day in their churchyard bed;
Some that I had not known were dead.

A long, long crowd — where each seemed lonely,
Yet of them all there was one, one only,
Raised a head or looked my way:
She lingered a moment — she might not stay.

How long since I saw that fair pale face!
Ah! Mother dear! might I only place
My head on thy breast, a moment to rest,
While thy hand on my tearful cheek were prest!

On, on, a moving bridge they made
Across the moon-stream, from shade to shade,
Young and old, women and men;
Many long-forgot, but remembered then.

And first there came a bitter laughter;
A sound of tears the moment after;
And then a music so lofty and gay,
That every morning, day by day
I strive to recall it if I may.

(1850)

## THESE LITTLE SONGS

These little Songs,
Found here and there,
Floating in air
By forest and lea,
Or hillside heather,
In houses and throngs,
Or down by the sea —
Have come together,
How, I can't tell.
But I know full well
No witty goose-wing
On an inkstand begot 'em;
Remember each place
And moment of grace,
In summer or spring,
Winter or autumn,
By sun, moon, stars,
Or a coal in the bars,
In market or church,
Graveyard or dance,
When they came without search,
Were found as by chance.
A word, a line,
You may say are mine;
But the best in the songs,
Whatever it be,
To you, and to me,
And to no one belongs. (1854)

## WILLIAM JOHNSON CORY
(1823-1892)

### HERACLITUS

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept, as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of gray ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take. (*1845;* 1858)

### MIMNERMUS IN CHURCH

You promise heavens free from strife,
  Pure truth, and perfect change of will;
But sweet, sweet is this human life,
  So sweet, I fain would breathe it still;
Your chilly stars I can forgo —
This warm kind world is all I know.

You say there is no substance here,
  One great reality above;
Back from that void I shrink in fear,
  And child-like hide myself in love.
Show me what angels feel. Till then,
I cling, a mere weak man, to men.

---

*These Little Songs.* This poem was printed as an introduction to a volume of verse entitled *Day and Night Songs.*

18. **the bars,** the grate.

*Heraclitus.* This poem is a translation of a lyric by the Greek poet Callimachus (c. 250 B.C.). Heraclitus, his friend, was an elegiac poet who lived at Hallicarnassus, a city of Caria in Asia Minor.

*Mimnermus in Church.* Mimnermus was a Greek elegiac poet (c. 600 B.C.) noted for his erotic verse. His chief themes were the transitoriness of life and the enjoyment of youth, which he called the age of love. Cory suggests that if Mimnermus could have heard the Christian gospel he might have replied in some such words as these. Cf. *The Rubáiyát,* lines 245-252, page 420.

You bid me lift my mean desires
From faltering lips and fitful veins
To sexless souls, ideal quires,
Unwearied voices, wordless strains;
My mind with fonder welcome owns
One dear dead friend's remembered tones.

Forsooth the present we must give
To that which cannot pass away;
All beauteous things for which we live
By laws of time and space decay.
But oh, the very reason why
I clasp them, is because they die. (1858)

## A POOR FRENCH SAILOR'S SCOTTISH SWEETHEART

I cannot forget my Joe,
I bid him be mine in sleep;
But battle and woe have changed him so
There's nothing to do but weep.

My mother rebukes me yet,
And I never was meek before;
His jacket is wet, his lip cold set,
He'll trouble our home no more.

Oh, breaker of reeds that bend!
Oh, quencher of tow that smokes!
I'd rather descend to my sailor friend
Than prosper with lofty folks.

I'm lying beside the gowan,
My Joe in the English bay;
I'm Annie Rowan, his Annie Rowan,
He called me his Bien-Aimée.

I'll hearken to all you quote,
Though I'd rather be deaf and free;
The little he wrote in the sinking boat
Is Bible and charm for me. (1877)

# FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON
## (1821-1895)

## ON AN OLD MUFF

Time has a magic wand!
What is this meets my hand,
Moth-eaten, moldy, and
Covered with fluff?
Faded, and stiff, and scant;
Can it be? no, it can't —
Yes, I declare, it's Aunt
Prudence's muff!

Years ago, twenty-three,
Old Uncle Doubledee
Gave it to Aunty P.
Laughing and teasing:
"Prue of the breezy curls,
Whisper those solemn churls,
*What holds a pretty girl's*
*Hand without squeezing?*"

Uncle was then a lad
Gay, but, I grieve to add,
Sinful, if smoking bad
*Baccy's* a vice;
Glossy was then this mink
Muff, lined with pretty pink
Satin, which maidens think
"Awfully nice!"

I seem to see again
Aunt in her hood and train
Glide, with a sweet disdain,
Gravely to Meeting;
Psalm-book, and kerchief new,
Peeped from the Muff of Prue;
Young men, and pious too,
Giving her greeting.

Sweetly her Sabbath sped
Then; from this Muff, it's said,
Tracts she distributed;
Converts (till Monday!),
Lured by the grace they lacked,
Followed her. One, in fact,
Asked for — and got — his tract
Twice of a Sunday!

Love has a potent spell;
Soon this bold ne'er-do-well,
Aunt's too susceptible
Heart undermining,
Slipped, so the scandal runs,
Notes in the pretty nun's
Muff — triple-cornered ones,
Pink as its lining.

Worse followed; soon the jade
Fled (to oblige her blade!)
Whilst her friends thought that they'd
Locked her up tightly.
After such shocking games
Aunt is of wedded dames
Gayest, and now her name's
Mrs. Golightly.

In female conduct, flaw
Sadder I never saw.
Faith still I've in the law
Of compensation.

---

*A Poor French Sailor's Scottish Sweetheart.* **10. tow**, flax. Cf. *Isaiah*, 42:3.—"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking of flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." **13. gowan**, daisy. **16. Bien-Aimée**, sweetheart.

Once Uncle went astray,
Smoked, joked, and swore away;
Sworn by he's now, by a
Large congregation.

Changed is the Child of Sin;
Now he's (he once was thin)
Grave, with a double chin —
Blest be his fat form!
Changed is the garb he wore,
Preacher was never more
Prized than is Uncle for
Pulpit or platform.

If all's as best befits
Mortals of slender wits,
Then beg this Muff and its
Fair Owner pardon.
*All's for the best,* indeed—
Such is my simple creed;
Still I must go and weed
Hard in my garden.

(1863)

## TOM TAYLOR (1817-1880)

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,
*You,* who with mocking pencil wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complaisant British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face,

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

*You,* whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,
Judging each step as though the way were plain,
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain.

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,
Between the mourners at his head and feet,
Say, scurrile jester, is there room for *you?*

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
To lame my pencil and confute my pen;
To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learned to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose;
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true;
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows;

How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work — such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand —
As one who knows, where there's a task to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good grace command;

Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow;
That God makes instruments to work his will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwarting mights —

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron bark that turns the lumberer's ax,
The rapid that o'erbears the boatman's toil,
The prairie hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear —
Such were the deeds that helped his youth to train:
Rough culture, but such trees large fruit may bear,
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years'
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,
And took both with the same unwavering mood —

---

*Abraham Lincoln.* This poem first appeared in *Punch.* Taylor was associated for some years with this magazine, which expressed a hostile attitude toward Lincoln during the Civil War period.

Till, as he came on light from darkling days,
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest,
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,
When this vile murderer brought swift eclipse
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high!
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came!

A deed accursed! Strokes have been struck before
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt
If more of horror or disgrace they bore;
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out,

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven,
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life
With much to praise, little to be forgiven!
(1865)

## GEORGE ELIOT (1819-1880)

### THE CHOIR INVISIBLE

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.
So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child,
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burthen of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better — saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude,
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love —
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread forever.
This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty —
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.
(*1867;* 1874)

## CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER (1808-1879)

### THE STEAM THRESHING-MACHINE

#### WITH THE STRAW-CARRIER

Flush with the pond the lurid furnace burned
At eve, while smoke and vapor filled the yard;
The gloomy winter sky was dimly starred,
The fly-wheel with a mellow murmur turned;
While, ever rising on its mystic stair
In the dim light, from secret chambers borne,
The straw of harvest, severed from the corn,
Climbed, and fell over, in the murky air.
I thought of mind and matter, will and law,
And then of him, who set his stately seal
Of Roman words on all the forms he saw
Of old-world husbandry; *I* could but feel

---

64. **peace . . . men.** From *Luke*, 2·14.

*The Steam Threshing-Machine.* 7. **corn,** wheat. 10-12. **him . . . husbandry,** a reference to Virgil (70-19 B.C.), whose *Georgics*, devoted to rural life and scenery, contains descriptions of farm implements. Cf. the picture of the plow in *Georgics*, 1, 166 ff.

With what a rich precision *he* would draw
The endless ladder, and the booming wheel!

CONTINUED

Did any seer of ancient time forebode
This mighty engine, which we daily see
Accepting our full harvests, like a god,
With clouds about his shoulders — it might be
Some poet-husbandman, some lord of verse,
Old Hesiod, or the wizard Mantuan,
Who catalogued in rich hexameters
The rake, the roller, and the mystic van;
Or else some priest of Ceres, it might seem,
Who witnessed, as he trod the silent fane,
The notes and auguries of coming change,
Of other ministrants in shrine and grange —
The sweating statue, and her sacred wain
Low-booming with the prophecy of steam!
(1868)

## DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
(1828-1882)

### THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To *one* it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me — her hair
Fell all about my face. . . .
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

attempts
description
realistica

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah, sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be harkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

---

*Continued.* 6. **Hesiod** (8th century B.C.), the father of Greek didactic poetry. He drew many faithful pictures of the life of his period. **Mantuan**, Virgil, who was born in the city of Mantua. 8. **van**, a fan or other winnowing device. The implements mentioned in this line were all sacred to Ceres, the Italian goddess of agriculture. They are mentioned by Virgil in *Georgics*, 1. 13. **sweating statue.** Drops of water that sometimes appeared on the statues of the gods were interpreted as foretelling disaster. **wain**, wagon, chariot; it was drawn by serpents.

*The Blessed Damozel.* The theme of this poem was suggested by Poe's *The Raven*, published in 1845. "I saw," Rossetti said, "that Poe had done the utmost it was possible to do with the grief of the lover on earth, and I determined to reverse the conditions, and give utterance to the yearning of the loved one in heaven." See Critical Notes.

10. **For . . . worn**, fittingly worn in the service of the Virgin Mary. 13. **Herseemed**, it seemed to her.

36. **midge**, a kind of small gnat or fly. 54. **stars . . . spheres.** From *Job*, 38: 7.—"Where wast thou . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" The ancients believed that the stars made music as they revolved in their spheres.

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not prayed?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayers sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret, and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb;
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak;
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles;
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be,
As then awhile, forever now,
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased.
The light thrilled toward her, filled
With angels in strong, level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres;
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)
(*1847;* 1850, 1856, 1870)

## MY SISTER'S SLEEP

She fell asleep on Christmas Eve;
At length the long-ungranted shade
Of weary eyelids overweighed
The pain naught else might yet relieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day
Over the bed from chime to chime,
Then raised herself for the first time,
And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
With work to finish. For the glare,

---

86. **living . . . tree,** the tree of life (see *Revelation*, 22:2). 87. **Dove,** a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity. 107-108. **Cecily . . . Rosalys.** These are names of famous Christian saints. St. Cecelia (3d century) is the patron saint of the blind and of musicians. (See Chaucer's *Second Nun's Tale* and odes in her honor by Dryden and Pope.) St. Gertrude (7th century) is the patron saint of travelers. St. Mary Magdalen is the patron saint of penitents (see *Mary Magdalene*, page 525). St. Margaret is the chosen type of female innocence and meekness. St. Rosalie (12th century) is the patron saint of the city of Palermo, Sicily.

126. **citherns and citoles,** medieval stringed musical instruments.

*My Sister's Sleep.* This is an imaginative poem without basis of fact in Rossetti's life.

Made by her candle, she had care
To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
  Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
  The hollow halo it was in
Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle sound
  Of flame, by vents the fireshine drove
  And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round.

I had been sitting up some nights,
  And my tired mind felt weak and blank;
  Like a sharp strengthening wine it drank
The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by dwindling years
  Heard in each hour, crept off; and then
  The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat;
  Her needles, as she laid them down,
  Met lightly, and her silken gown
Settled — no other noise than that.

Teenager poem really

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"
  So, as said angels, she did say;
  Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till morn.

Just then in the room over us
  There was a pushing back of chairs,
  As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious, softly-stepping haste
  Our mother went where Margaret lay,
  Fearing the sounds o'erhead — should they
Have broken her long watched-for rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and turned,
  But suddenly turned back again;
  And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
  And held my breath, and spoke no word.
  There was none spoken; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept;
  And both my arms fell, and I said,
  "God knows I knew that she was dead."
And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
  A little after twelve o'clock
  We said, ere the first quarter struck,
"Christ's blessing on the newly born!"

*(1847;* 1850)

## THE PORTRAIT

This is her picture as she was;
  It seems a thing to wonder on,
As though mine image in the glass
  Should tarry when myself am gone.
I gaze until she seems to stir,
Until mine eyes almost aver
  That now, even now, the sweet lips part
  To breathe the words of the sweet heart —
And yet the earth is over her.

Alas! even such the thin-drawn ray
  That makes the prison-depths more rude —
The drip of water night and day
  Giving a tongue to solitude.
Yet only this, of love's whole prize,
Remains; save what in mournful guise
  Takes counsel with my soul alone —
  Save what is secret and unknown,
Below the earth, above the skies.

In painting her I shrined her face
  'Mid mystic trees, where light falls in
Hardly at all; a covert place
  Where you might think to find a din
Of doubtful talk, and a live flame
Wandering, and many a shape whose name
  Not itself knoweth, and old dew,
  And your own footsteps meeting you,
And all things going as they came.

A deep dim wood; and there she stands
  As in that wood that day — for so
Was the still movement of her hands
  And such the pure line's gracious flow.
And passing fair the type must seem,
Unknown the presence and the dream.
  'Tis she — though of herself, alas!
  Less than her shadow on the grass
Or than her image in the stream.

That day we met there, I and she
  One with the other all alone;
And we were blithe; yet memory
  Saddens those hours, as when the moon
Looks upon daylight. And with her
I stooped to drink the spring-water,
  Athirst where other waters sprang;
  And where the echo is, she sang —
My soul another echo there.

---

25. **dwindling years,** old persons.

*The Portrait.* The subject of the portrait is imaginary.

But when that hour my soul won strength
For words whose silence wastes and kills,
Dull raindrops smote us, and at length
Thundered the heat within the hills.
That eve I spoke those words again
Beside the pelted window-pane;
And there she harkened what I said,
With under-glances that surveyed
The empty pastures blind with rain.

Next day the memories of these things,
Like leaves through which a bird has flown,
Still vibrated with Love's warm wings;
Till I must make them all my own
And paint this picture. So, 'twixt ease
Of talk and sweet, long silences,
She stood among the plants in bloom
At windows of a summer room,
To feign the shadow of the trees.

And as I wrought, while all above
And all around was fragrant air,
In the sick burthen of my love
It seemed each sun-thrilled blossom there
Beat like a heart among the leaves.
O heart that never beats nor heaves,
In that one darkness lying still,
What now to thee my love's great will,
Or the fine web the sunshine weaves?

For now doth daylight disavow
Those days — naught left to see or hear.
Only in solemn whispers now
At night-time these things reach mine ear,
When the leaf-shadows at a breath
Shrink in the road, and all the heath,
Forest and water, far and wide,
In limpid starlight glorified,
Lie like the mystery of death.

Last night at last I could have slept,
And yet delayed my sleep till dawn,
Still wandering. Then it was I wept;
For unawares I came upon
Those glades where once she walked with me;
And as I stood there suddenly,
All wan with traversing the night,
Upon the desolate verge of light
Yearned loud the iron-bosomed sea.

Even so, where Heaven holds breath and hears
The beating heart of Love's own breast —
Where round the secret of all spheres
All angels lay their wings to rest —
How shall my soul stand rapt and awed,
When, by the new birth borne abroad
Throughout the music of the suns,
It enters in her soul at once
And knows the silence there for God!

Here with her face doth memory sit
Meanwhile, and wait the day's decline,
Till other eyes shall look from it,
Eyes of the spirit's Palestine,
Even than the old gaze tenderer;
While hopes and aims long lost with her
Stand round her image side by side,
Like tombs of pilgrims that have died
About the Holy Sepulcher. (*1847;* 1870)

## AT THE SUNRISE IN 1848

God said, Let there be light! and there was light.
Then heard we sounds as though the Earth did sing
And the Earth's angel cried upon the wing;
We saw priests fall together and turn white;
And covered in the dust from the sun's sight,
A king was spied, and yet another king.
We said: "The round world keeps its balancing;
On this globe, they and we are opposite —
If it is day with us, with them 'tis night.
Still, Man, in thy just pride, remember this:
Thou hadst not made that thy sons' sons shall ask
What the word *king* may mean in their day's task,
But for the light that led; and if light is,
It is because God said, Let there be light."
(*1848;* 1886)

## ON REFUSAL OF AID BETWEEN NATIONS

Not that the earth is changing, O my God!
Nor that the seasons totter in their walk —
Not that the virulent ill of act and talk
Seethes ever as a winepress ever trod —
Not therefore are we certain that the rod
Weighs in thine hand to smite thy world; though now
Beneath thine hand so many nations bow,
So many kings — not therefore, O my God! —
But because Man is parceled out in men
Today; because, for any wrongful blow,
No man not stricken asks, "I would be told
Why thou dost thus"; but his heart whispers then,
"He is he, I am I." By this we know
That the earth falls asunder, being old.
(*1848;* 1870)

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*At the Sunrise in 1848.* The poem refers to the European revolutions of 1848. Cf. Mrs. Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows*, page 373.

1. **God . . . light.** Quoted from *Genesis*, 1:3.

*On the Refusal of Aid between Nations.* This poem refers to the indifference of other nations to the struggles of Italy and Hungary against the tyranny of Austria in 1846 ff.

## MARY'S GIRLHOOD

(*For a Picture*)

### I

This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect
God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
Profound simplicity of intellect,
And supreme patience. From her mother's knee
Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity;
Strong in grave peace; in pity circumspect.
So held she through her girlhood; as it were
An angel-watered lily, that near God
Grows and is quiet. Till, one dawn at home
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
At all — yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed,
Because the fullness of the time was come.

### 2

These are the symbols. On that cloth of red
I' the center is the Tripoint; perfect each,
Except the second of its points, to teach
That Christ is not yet born. The books — whose head
Is golden Charity, as Paul hath said —
Those virtues are wherein the soul is rich;
Therefore on them the lily standeth, which
Is Innocence, being interpreted.
The seven-thorned briar and the palm seven-leaved
Are her great sorrow and her great reward.
Until the end be full, the Holy One
Abides without. She soon shall have achieved
Her perfect purity; yea, God the Lord
Shall soon vouchsafe His Son to be her Son.
(*1848;* 1849)

## FOR A VENETIAN PASTORAL

### BY GIORGIONE

(*In the Louvre*)

Water, for anguish of the solstice — nay,
But dip the vessel, slowly — nay, but lean
And hark how at its verge the wave sighs in,
Reluctant. Hush! Beyond all depth away
The heat lies silent at the brink of day;
Now the hand trails upon the viol-string
That sobs, and the brown faces cease to sing,
Sad with the whole of pleasure. Whither stray
Her eyes now, from whose mouth the slim pipes creep
And leave it pouting, while the shadowed grass
Is cool against her naked side? Let be —
Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
Nor name this ever. Be it as it was —
Life touching lips with Immortality. (1850)

## THE CARD-DEALER

Could you not drink her gaze like wine?
Yet though its splendor swoon
Into the silence languidly
As a tune into a tune,
Those eyes unravel the coiled night
And know the stars at noon.

The gold that's heaped beside her hand,
In truth rich prize it were;
And rich the dreams that wreathe her brows
With magic stillness there;
And he were rich who should unwind
That woven golden hair.

Around her, where she sits, the dance
Now breathes its eager heat;
And not more lightly or more true
Fall there the dancers' feet
Than fall her cards on the bright board
As 'twere an heart that beat.

Her fingers let them softly through,
Smooth polished silent things;
And each one as it falls reflects
In swift light-shadowings,
Blood-red and purple, green and blue,
The great eyes of her rings.

Whom plays she with? With thee, who lov'st
Those gems upon her hand;
With me, who search her secret brows;
With all men, blessed or banned.
We play together, she and we,
Within a vain strange land:

A land without any order —
Day even as night (one saith) —
Where who lieth down ariseth not

---

*Mary's Girlhood.* These two sonnets were written for Rossetti's first exhibited picture, painted in 1848.

*Sonnet 2.* 1. **symbols.** The symbols mentioned are in the picture. 2. **the Tripoint,** a triangle symbolizing God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. 5. **Paul hath said,** in *1 Corinthians,* 13:13.—"And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." 10. **sorrow . . . reward.** For the Seven Sorrows of Mary, see note on Browning's *Up at a Villa—Down in the City,* 52, page 223. The Seven Joys are as follows: the annunciation of the angel Gabriel (*Luke,* 1:26-38); the visitation (*Luke,* 1:39-56); the nativity (*Luke,* 2:6-7); the adoration of the Magi (*Matthew,* 2:1-12); the presentation in the temple (*Luke,* 2:22-33); the finding of the lost child (*Luke,* 2:41-51); and the assumption (*Luke,* 24:50-53).

*For a Venetian Pastoral.* This sonnet was written for a picture in which two cavaliers and a nude woman are seated on the grass, with musical instruments, while another woman dips a vase into a well for water. The picture was painted by Giorgione da Castelfranco (1478?-1511), a Venetian artist, and now hangs in the Louvre, Paris.

1. **anguish of the solstice,** suffering from the heat of the summer solstice.

Nor the sleeper awakeneth;
A land of darkness as darkness itself
And of the shadow of death.

What be her cards, you ask? Even these:
The heart, that doth but crave
More, having fed; the diamond,
Skilled to make base seem brave;
The club, for smiting in the dark;
The spade, to dig a grave.

And do you ask what game she plays?
With me 'tis lost or won;
With thee it is playing still; with him
It is not well begun;
But 'tis a game she plays with all
Beneath the sway o' the sun.

Thou seest the card that falls, she knows
The card that followeth;
Her game in thy tongue is called Life,
As ebbs thy daily breath.
When she shall speak, thou'lt learn her tongue
And know she calls it Death. (*1849;* 1870)

## ON THE "VITA NUOVA" OF DANTE

As he that loves oft looks on the dear form
And guesses how it grew to womanhood,
And gladly would have watched the beauties bud
And the mild fire of precious life wax warm —
So I, long bound within the threefold charm
Of Dante's love sublimed to heavenly mood,
Had marveled, touching his Beatitude,
How grew such presence from man's shameful swarm.
At length within this book I found portrayed
Newborn that Paradisal Love of his,
And simple like a child; with whose clear aid
I understood. To such a child as this,
Christ, charging well his chosen ones, forbade
Offense: "For lo! of such my kingdom is."
(1870)

## WORLD'S WORTH

'Tis of the Father Hilary.
He strove, but could not pray; so took
The steep-coiled stair, where his feet shook
A sad blind echo. Ever up
He toiled. 'Twas a sick sway of air
That autumn noon within the stair,
As dizzy as a turning cup.
His brain benumbed him, void and thin;
He shut his eyes and felt it spin;
The obscure deafness hemmed him in.
He said, "O world, what world for me?"

He leaned unto the balcony
Where the chime keeps the night and day;
It hurt his brain, he could not pray.
He had his face upon the stone;
Deep 'twixt the narrow shafts, his eye
Passed all the roofs to the stark sky,
Swept with no wing, with wind alone.
Close to his feet the sky did shake
With wind in pools that the rains make;
The ripple set his eyes to ache.
He said, "O world, what world for me?"

He stood within the mystery
Girding God's blessed Eucharist;
The organ and the chant had ceased.
The last words paused against his ear
Said from the altar; drawn round him
The gathering rest was dumb and dim.
And now the sacring-bell rang clear
And ceased; and all was awe — the breath
Of God in man that warranteth
The inmost utmost things of faith.
He said, "O God, my world in Thee!" (1850)

## THE SEA-LIMITS

Consider the sea's listless chime:
Time's self it is, made audible —
The murmur of the earth's own shell.
Secret continuance sublime
Is the sea's end; our sight may pass
No furlong further. Since time was,
This sound hath told the lapse of time.

No quiet, which is death's — it hath
The mournfulness of ancient life,
Enduring always at dull strife.
As the world's heart of rest and wrath,
Its painful pulse is in the sands.
Last utterly, the whole sky stands,
Gray and not known, along its path.

Listen alone beside the sea,
Listen alone among the woods;
Those voices of twin solitudes
Shall have one sound alike to thee.
Hark where the murmurs of thronged men
Surge and sink back and surge again —
Still the one voice of wave and tree.

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*On the "Vita Nuova" of Dante.* The *Vita Nuova* (*New Life*) is an early lyrical sequence with prose commentary presenting the story of Dante's love life.

5. **threefold charm**, a reference to the three parts of *The Divine Comedy—Inferno, Purgatory,* and *Paradise.* 6. **sublimed**, raised to a sublime plane. 7. **Beatitude**, Dante's blessed state, which came as a result of *The Divine Comedy.* 14. **of such . . . is.** From *Mark,* 10:14.—"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

*World's Worth.* 1. **Father Hilary**, an early saint and bishop of the fourth century.

24. **Eucharist**, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. 29. **sacring-bell**, a bell rung at certain times during the Mass, or the Communion Service.

Gather a shell from the strown beach
And listen at its lips; they sigh
The same desire and mystery,
The echo of the whole sea's speech.
And all mankind is thus at heart
Not anything but what thou art;
And Earth, Sea, Man, are all in each.

(*1849;* 1850)

## DANTE AT VERONA

"Yea, thou shalt learn how salt his food who fares
Upon another's bread — how steep his path
Who treadeth up and down another's stairs."
—*Div. Com. Parad.* xvii.

"Behold, even I, even I am Beatrice."
—*Div. Com. Purg.* xxx.

Of Florence and of Beatrice
Servant and singer from of old,
O'er Dante's heart in youth had tolled
The knell that gave his Lady peace;
And now in manhood flew the dart
Wherewith his city pierced his heart.

Yet if his Lady's home above
Was heaven, on earth she filled his soul;
And if his city held control
To cast the body forth to rove,
The soul could soar from earth's vain throng,
And heaven and hell fulfill the song.

Follow his feet's appointed way —
But little light we find that clears
The darkness of the exiled years.
Follow his spirit's journey — nay,
What fires are blent, what winds are blown
On paths his feet may tread alone?

Yet of the twofold life he led
In chainless thought and fettered will
Some glimpses reach us — somewhat still
Of the steep stairs and bitter bread —
Of the soul's quest whose stern avow
For years had made him haggard now.

Alas! the Sacred Song whereto
Both heaven and earth had set their hand
Not only at Fame's gate did stand
Knocking to claim the passage through,
But toiled to ope that heavier door
Which Florence shut for evermore.

Shall not his birth's baptismal town
One last high presage yet fulfill,
And at that font in Florence still
His forehead take the laurel-crown?
O God! or shall dead souls deny
The undying soul its prophecy?

Aye, 'tis their hour. Not yet forgot
The bitter words he spoke that day
When for some great charge far away
Her rulers his acceptance sought.
"And if I go, who stays?" — so rose
His scorn — "and if I stay, who goes?"

"Lo! thou art gone now, and we stay"
(The curled lips mutter); "and no star
Is from thy mortal path so far
As streets where childhood knew the way.
To heaven and hell thy feet may win,
But thine own house they come not in."

Therefore, the loftier rose the song
To touch the secret things of God,
The deeper pierced the hate that trod
On base men's track who wrought the wrong;
Till the soul's effluence came to be
Its own exceeding agony.

Arriving only to depart,
From court to court, from land to land,
Like flame within the naked hand
His body bore his burning heart,
That still on Florence strove to bring
God's fire for a burnt offering.

Even such was Dante's mood, when now,
Mocked for long years with Fortune's sport,
He dwelt at yet another court,
There where Verona's knee did bow
And her voice hailed with all acclaim
Can Grande della Scala's name.

As that lord's kingly guest awhile
His life we follow; through the days
Which walked in exile's barren ways —
The nights which still beneath one smile
Heard through all spheres one song increase —
"Even I, even I am Beatrice."

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*Dante at Verona.* This poem, originally called *Dante in Exile*, was written as an introduction to Rossetti's translation of Dante's *Vita Nuova*. (See *On the "Vita Nuova" of Dante* and note, page 506.) Dante Alighieri was born in Florence in 1265 and lived there until he was exiled in 1302 for opposing the policy of Pope Boniface, who desired to gain complete control of the city. The rest of Dante's life was spent in exile, few details of which are known. He died in Ravenna in 1321. The quotations below the title are from Dante's most famous work, *The Divine Comedy*, which is composed of three parts—*Inferno*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*.

1. **Beatrice**, the young woman whom Dante loved and who influenced the whole course of his later life. Tradition has identified her with the daughter of Folco Portinari, a wealthy Florentine. She died in 1290. 25. **Sacred Song**, *The Divine Comedy*.

34. **laurel-crown.** A crown of laurel was often bestowed upon men for distinguished service or achievement. Within twenty years after his death Florence recognized Dante as her greatest man. 39. **great charge.** Dante was selected in 1301 for an important embassy to the Pope. It is not known whether he went. 52. **the wrong**, Dante's exile. 66. **Can Grande della Scala** (1291-1329), the ruler of Verona from 1311 to 1329, and the leader of the Lombard Ghibellines, the party antagonistic to the Pope.

At Can La Scala's court, no doubt,
Due reverence did his steps attend;
The ushers on his path would bend
At ingoing as at going out;
The penman waited on his call
At council-board, the grooms in hall.

And pages hushed their laughter down,
And gay squires stilled the merry stir,
When he passed up the dais-chamber
With set brows lordlier than a frown;
And tire-maids hidden among these
Drew close their loosened bodices.

Perhaps the priests (exact to span
All God's circumference), if at whiles
They found him wandering in their aisles,
Grudged ghostly greeting to the man
By whom, though not of ghostly guild,
With heaven and hell men's hearts were filled.

And the court-poets (he, forsooth,
A whole world's poet strayed to court!)
Had for his scorn their hate's retort.
He'd meet them flushed with easy youth,
Hot on their errands. Like noon-flies
They vexed him in the ears and eyes.

But at this court, peace still must wrench
Her chaplet from the teeth of war:
By day they held high watch afar,
At night they cried across the trench;
And still, in Dante's path, the fierce
Gaunt soldiers wrangled o'er their spears.

But vain seemed all the strength to him,
As golden convoys sunk at sea
Whose wealth might root out penury;
Because it was not, limb with limb,
Knit like his heart-strings round the wall
Of Florence, that ill pride might fall.

Yet in the tiltyard, when the dust
Cleared from the sundered press of knights
Ere yet again it swoops and smites,
He almost deemed his longing must
Find force to wield that multitude
And hurl that strength the way he would.

How should he move them — fame and gain
On all hands calling them at strife?
He still might find but his one life
To give, by Florence counted vain;
One heart the false hearts made her doubt
One voice she heard once and cast out.

Oh! if his Florence could but come,
A lily-sceptered damsel fair,
As her own Giotto painted her
On many shields and gates at home —
A lady crowned, at a soft pace
Riding the lists round to the dais;

Till where Can Grande rules the lists,
As young as Truth, as calm as Force,
She draws her rein now, while her horse
Bows at the turn of the white wrists;
And when each knight within his stall
Gives ear, she speaks and tells them all:

All the foul tale — truth sworn untrue
And falsehood's triumph. All the tale?
Great God! and must she not prevail
To fire them ere they heard it through —
And hand achieve ere heart could rest
That high adventure of her quest?

How would his Florence lead them forth,
Her bridle ringing as she went;
And at the last within her tent,
'Neath golden lilies worship-worth,
How queenly would she bend the while
And thank the victors with her smile!

Also her lips should turn his way
And murmur: "O thou tried and true,
With whom I wept the long years through!
What shall it profit if I say,
Thee I remember? Nay, through thee
All ages shall remember me."

Peace, Dante, peace! The task is long,
The time wears short to compass it.
Within thine heart such hopes may flit
And find a voice in deathless song;
But lo! as children of man's earth,
Those hopes are dead before their birth.

Fame tells us that Verona's court
Was a fair place. The feet might still
Wander forever at their will
In many ways of sweet resort;
And still in many a heart around
The poet's name due honor found.

Watch we his steps He comes upon
The women at their palm-playing.
The conduits round the gardens sing
And meet in scoops of milk-white stone,
Where wearied damsels rest and hold
Their hands in the wet spurt of gold.

One of whom, knowing well that he,
By some found stern, was mild with them,

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88. **ghostly**, spiritual.

123. **Giotto**, Giotto di Bondone (1276-1337), a famous Florentine painter, sculptor, and architect. See Browning's *Old Pictures in Florence*, page 224. 142. **golden lilies**; constituting the badge of the City of Florence. 164. **palm-playing**, a game like tennis, but in which the ball was struck by the hand instead of a racket.

Would run and pluck his garment's hem,
Saying, "Messer Dante, pardon me" —
Praying that they might hear the song
Which first of all he made, when young,

"Donne che avete" . . . Thereunto
Thus would he murmur, having first
Drawn near the fountain, while she nursed
His hand against her side: a few
Sweet words, and scarcely those, half said;
Then turned, and changed, and bowed his head.

For then the voice said in his heart,
"Even I, even I am Beatrice";
And his whole life would yearn to cease,
Till having reached his room, apart
Beyond vast lengths of palace-floor,
He drew the arras round his door.

At such times, Dante, thou hast set
Thy forehead to the painted pane
Full oft, I know; and if the rain
Smote it outside, her fingers met
Thy brow; and if the sun fell there,
Her breath was on thy face and hair.

Then, weeping, I think certainly
Thou hast beheld, past sight of eyne —
Within another room of thine
Where now thy body may not be
But where in thought thou still remain'st —
A window often wept against:

The window thou, a youth, hast sought,
Flushed in the limpid eventime,
Ending with daylight the day's rime
Of her; where oftenwhiles her thought
Held thee—the lamp untrimmed to write—
In joy through the blue lapse of night.

At Can La Scala's court, no doubt,
Guests seldom wept. It was brave sport,
No doubt, at Can La Scala's court,
Within the palace and without;
Where music, set to madrigals,
Loitered all day through groves and halls.

Because Can Grande of his life
Had not had six-and-twenty years
As yet. And when the chroniclers
Tell you of that Vicenza strife
And of strifes elsewhere — you must not
Conceive for church-sooth he had got

Just nothing in his wits but war;
Though doubtless 'twas the young man's joy
(Grown with his growth from a mere boy)
To mark his "Viva Cane!" scare
The foe's shut front, till it would reel
All blind with shaken points of steel.

But there were places — held too sweet
For eyes that had not the due veil
Of lashes and clear lids — as well
In favor as his saddle-seat;
Breath of low speech he scorned not there
Nor light, cool fingers in his hair.

Yet if the child whom the sire's plan
Made free of a deep treasure-chest
Scoffed it with ill-conditioned jest —
We may be sure too that the man
Was not mere thews, nor all content
With lewdness swathed in sentiment.

So you may read and marvel not
That such a man as Dante — one
Who, while Can Grande's deeds were done,
Had drawn his robe round him and thought —
Now at the same guest-table fared
Where keen Uguccio wiped his beard.

Through leaves and trellis-work the sun
Left the wine cool within the glass —
They feasting where no sun could pass;
And when the women, all as one,
Rose up with brightened cheeks to go,
It was a comely thing, we know.

But Dante recked not of the wine;
Whether the women stayed or went,
His visage held one stern intent;
And when the music had its sign
To breathe upon them for more ease,
Sometimes he turned and bade it cease.

And as he spared not to rebuke
The mirth, so oft in council he
To bitter truth bore testimony;
And when the crafty balance shook
Well poised to make the wrong prevail,
Then Dante's hand would turn the scale.

And if some envoy from afar
Sailed to Verona's sovereign port
For aid or peace, and all the court
Fawned on its lord, "the Mars of war,
Sole arbiter of life and death" —
Be sure that Dante saved his breath.

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173-174. **song . . . young,** the *Vita Nuova*, written when Dante was twenty-five years old. 175. **"Donne che avete,"** the opening words of the first canzone of the *Vita Nuova*. The sentence reads, "Ladies, who have intelligence of love, hear me." 214. **Vicenza strife.** During his rule Scala forcefully extended his power over Vicenza and other cities of the province.

220. **"Viva Cane,"** may Can live! 240. **Uguccio,** Uguccione della Faggiuola, the captain of the Ghibellines and a friend and protector of Dante. (See note on line 66.) 262. **Mars,** the Greek god of war.

And Can La Scala marked askance
These things, accepting them for shame
And scorn, till Dante's guestship came
To be a peevish sufferance;
His host sought ways to make his days
Hateful — and such have many ways.

There was a jester, a foul lout,
Whom the court loved for graceless arts;
Sworn scholiast of the bestial parts
Of speech; a ribald mouth to shout
In Folly's horny tympanum
Such things as make the wise man dumb.

Much loved, him Dante loathed. And so,
One day when Dante felt perplexed
If any day that could come next
Were worth the waiting for or no,
And mute he sat amid their din —
Can Grande called the jester in.

Rank words, with such, are wit's best wealth.
Lords mouthed approval; ladies kept
Twittering with clustered heads, except
Some few that took their trains by stealth
And went. Can Grande shook his hair
And smote his thighs and laughed i' the air.

Then, facing on his guest, he cried —
"Say, Messer Dante, how it is
I get out of a clown like this
More than your wisdom can provide."
And Dante: "'Tis man's ancient whim
That still his like seems good to him."

Also a tale is told, how once,
At clearing tables after meat,
Piled for a jest at Dante's feet
Were found the dinner's well-picked bones,
So laid, to please the banquet's lord,
By one who crouched beneath the board.

Then smiled Can Grande to the rest:
"Our Dante's tuneful mouth indeed
Lacks not the gift on flesh to feed!"
"Fair host of mine," replied the guest,
"So many bones you'd not descry
If so it chanced the *dog* were I."

But wherefore should we turn the grout
In a drained cup, or be at strife
From the worn garment of a life
To rip the twisted ravel out?
Good needs expounding; but of ill
Each hath enough to guess his fill.

They named him Justicer-at-Law:
Each month to bear the tale in mind
Of hues a wench might wear unfined
And of the load an ox might draw;
To cavil in the weight of bread
And to see purse-thieves gibbeted.

And when his spirit wove the spell
(From under even to over-noon
In converse with itself alone),
As high as heaven, as low as hell —
He would be summoned and must go;
For had not Gian stabbed Giacomo?

Therefore the bread he had to eat
Seemed brackish, less like corn than tares;
And the rush-strown accustomed stairs
Each day were steeper to his feet;
And when the night-vigil was done,
His brows would ache to feel the sun.

Nevertheless, when from his kin
There came the tidings how at last
In Florence a decree was passed
Whereby all banished folk might win
Free pardon, so a fine were paid
And act of public penance made —

This Dante writ in answer thus,
Words such as these: "That clearly they
In Florence must not have to say —
The man abode aloof from us
Nigh fifteen years, yet lastly skulked
Hither to candleshrift and mulct.

"That he was one the heavens forbid
To traffic in God's justice sold
By market-weight of earthly gold,
Or to bow down over the lid
Of steaming censers, and so be
Made clean of manhood's obloquy.

"That since no gate led, by God's will,
To Florence, but the one whereat
The priests and money-changers sat,
He still would wander; for that still,
Even through the body's prison-bars,
His soul possessed the sun and stars."

Such were his words. It is indeed
Forever well our singers should
Utter good words and know them good
Not through song only; with close heed
Lest, having spent for the work's sake
Six days, the man be left to make.

Months o'er Verona, till the feast
Was come for Florence the Free Town;

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269-270. **days . . . Hateful.** Edmund Gardner in *Dante*, page 36, states that "the old legend of Dante's having met with discourtesy at the hands of Can Grande is to be absolutely rejected." 273. **scholiast**, commentator. 306. **the dog were I**, a pun; *cane* is the Italian word for *dog*. 307. **grout**, dregs.

315. **unfined**, without penalty. 326. **corn**, wheat. 342. **candleshrift**, a shrift, or ceremony of confession and forgiveness, in which candles are carried.

And at the shrine of Baptist John
The exiles, girt with many a priest
And carrying candles as they went,
Were held to mercy of the saint.

On the high seats in sober state —
Gold neck-chains range o'er range below
Gold screen-work where the lilies grow —
The Heads of the Republic sate,
Marking the humbled face go by
Each one of his house-enemy.

And as each proscript rose and stood
From kneeling in the ashen dust
On the shrine-steps, some magnate thrust
A beard into the velvet hood
Of his front colleague's gown, to see
The cinders stuck in the bare knee.

Tosinghi passed, Manelli passed,
Rinucci passed, each in his place;
But not an Alighieri's face
Went by that day from first to last
In the Republic's triumph; nor
A foot came home to Dante's door.

(Respublica — a public thing:
A shameful shameless prostitute,
Whose lust with one lord may not suit,
So takes by turns its reveling
A night with each, till each at morn
Is stripped and beaten forth forlorn,

And leaves her, cursing her. If she,
Indeed, have not some spice-draft, hid
In scent under a silver lid,
To drench his open throat with — he
Once hard asleep; and thrust him not
At dawn beneath the boards to rot.

Such *this* Republic!—not the Maid
He yearned for; she who yet should stand
With Heaven's accepted hand in hand,
Invulnerable and unbetrayed:
To whom, even as to God, should be
Obeisance one with Liberty.)

Years filled out their twelve moons, and ceased
One in another; and alway
There were the whole twelve hours each day
And each night as the years increased;
And rising moon and setting sun
Beheld that Dante's work was done.

What of his work for Florence? Well
It was, he knew, and well must be.
Yet evermore her hate's decree
Dwelt in his thought intolerable:
His body to be burned — his soul
To beat its wings at hope's vain goal.

What of his work for Beatrice?
Now well-nigh was the third song writ —
The stars a third time sealing it
With sudden music of pure peace;
For echoing thrice the threefold song,
The unnumbered stars the tone prolong.

Each hour, as then the Vision passed,
He heard the utter harmony
Of the nine trembling spheres, till she
Bowed her eyes toward him in the last,
So that all ended with her eyes,
Hell, Purgatory, Paradise.

"It is my trust, as the years fall,
To write more worthily of her
Who now, being made God's minister,
Looks on His visage and knows all."
Such was the hope that love did blend
With grief's slow fires, to make an end

Of the *New Life*, his youth's dear book;
Adding thereunto: "In such trust
I labor, and believe I must
Accomplish this which my soul took
In charge, if God, my Lord and hers,
Leave my life with me a few years."

The trust which he had borne in youth
Was all at length accomplished. He
At length had written worthily —
Yea even of her; no rimes uncouth
'Twixt tongue and tongue; but by God's aid
The first words Italy had said.

Ah! haply now the heavenly guide
Was not the last form seen by him;
But there that Beatrice stood slim
And bowed in passing at his side,
For whom in youth his heart made moan
Then when the city sat alone.

Clearly herself; the same whom he
Met, not past girlhood, in the street,
Low-bosomed and with hidden feet;
And then as woman perfectly,
In years that followed, many an once—
And now at last among the suns

363. **shrine . . . John,** the Baptistry of St. John, one of the oldest buildings in Florence. 379. **Tosinghi,** etc., names of other exiled Florentines.

413. **body to be burned.** This was the last sentence passed by Florence against Dante. 416. **third song,** the *Paradise*, the third part of *The Divine Comedy*. 417. **stars . . . it.** The last word in each of the parts of *The Divine Comedy* is *stelle*, meaning *stars*. 422. **harmony.** See note on line 54 of *The Blessed Damozel*, page 501. 444. **first words . . . said,** a reference to the rise of vernacular literature. 450. **Then . . . alone,** words used by Dante in the *Vita Nuova* when he speaks of Beatrice's death.

In that high vision. But indeed
It may be memory did recall
Last to him then the first of all —
The child his boyhood bore in heed
Nine years. At length the voice brought peace —
"Even I, even I am Beatrice."

All this, being there, we had not seen.
Seen only was the shadow wrought
On the strong features bound in thought;
The vagueness gaining gait and mien;
The white streaks gathering clear to view
In the burnt beard the women knew.

For a tale tells that on his track,
As through Verona's streets he went,
This saying certain women sent:
"Lo, he that strolls to hell and back
At will! Behold him, how hell's reek
Has crisped his beard and singed his cheek."

"Whereat" (Boccaccio's words) "he smiled
For pride in fame." It might be so;
Nevertheless we cannot know
If haply he were not beguiled
To bitterer mirth, who scarce could tell
If he indeed were back from hell.

So the day came, after a space,
When Dante felt assured that there
The sunshine must lie sicklier
Even than in any other place,
Save only Florence. When that day
Had come, he rose and went his way.

He went and turned not. From his shoes
It may be that he shook the dust,
As every righteous dealer must
Once and again ere life can close;
And unaccomplished destiny
Struck cold his forehead, it may be.

No book keeps record how the prince
Sunned himself out of Dante's reach,
Nor how the jester stank in speech;
While courtiers, used to smile and wince,
Poets and harlots, all the throng,
Let loose their scandal and their song.

No book keeps record if the seat
Which Dante held at his host's board
Were sat in next by clerk or lord —
If leman lolled with dainty feet
At ease, or hostage brooded there,
Or priest lacked silence for his prayer.

Eat and wash hands, Can Grande; scarce
We know their deeds now — hands which fed
Our Dante with that bitter bread;
And thou the watchdog of those stairs
Which, of all paths his feet knew well,
Were steeper found than heaven or hell.

(1870)

## THE BURDEN OF NINEVEH

In our Museum galleries
Today I lingered o'er the prize
Dead Greece vouchsafes to living eyes —
Her Art forever in fresh wise
From hour to hour rejoicing me.
Sighing I turned at last to win
Once more the London dirt and din;
And as I made the swing-door spin
And issued, they were hoisting in
A wingéd beast from Nineveh.

A human face the creature wore,
And hoofs behind and hoofs before,
And flanks with dark runes fretted o'er.
'Twas bull, 'twas mitered Minotaur,
A dead disboweled mystery;
The mummy of a buried faith
Stark from the charnel without scathe,
Its wings stood for the light to bathe —
Such fossil cerements as might swathe
The very corpse of Nineveh.

The print of its first rush-wrapping,
Wound ere it dried, still ribbed the thing.
What song did the brown maidens sing,
From purple mouths alternating,
When that was woven languidly?
What vows, what rites, what prayers preferred,
What songs has the strange image heard?
In what blind vigil stood interred
For ages, till an English word
Broke silence first at Nineveh?

Oh, when upon each sculptured court,
Where even the wind might not resort —

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475. **Boccaccio**, Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75), famous Italian prose writer. He was the first lecturer on Dante in Florence and left a brief treatise on Dante's life. 488. **shook the dust.** When Jesus sent the disciples forth to preach, he said to them: "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet" (*Matthew*, 10:14).

*The Burden of Nineveh.* The title is identical with the opening words of *Nahum.* Nineveh was the famous capital of the ancient Assyrian Empire. The city was destroyed by the Medes and the Chaldeans in 600 B.C. and during the centuries that followed was completely buried under drifting sands. In 1845-51 excavations on the site, under the direction of Sir Austen Layard (1817-94) of England, revealed ancient palaces, libraries, and sculptures, including colossal winged man-headed statues of bulls and lions. Rossetti got the suggestion for the poem while watching some of the sculptures being unpacked at the British Museum in London. 13. **runes,** ancient characters used in writing. They are called "dark" because their meaning is concealed. 14. **Minotaur,** a mythological monster slain by Theseus, a great hero of Athens. The beast was half man and half bull.

O'er which Time passed, of like import
With the wild Arab boys at sport —
A living face looked in to see. —
Oh, seemed it not — the spell once broke —
As though the carven warriors woke,
As though the shaft the string forsook,
The cymbals clashed, the chariots shook,
And there was life in Nineveh?

On London stones our sun anew
The beast's recovered shadow threw.
(No shade that plague of darkness knew,
No light, no shade, while older grew
By ages the old earth and sea.)
Lo thou! could all thy priests have shown
Such proof to make thy godhead known?
From their dead Past thou liv'st alone;
And still thy shadow is thine own,
Even as of yore in Nineveh.

That day whereof we keep record,
When near thy city-gates the Lord
Sheltered his Jonah with a gourd,
This sun (I said), here present, poured
Even thus this shadow that I see.
This shadow has been shed the same
From sun and moon — from lamps which came
For prayer — from fifteen days of flame,
The last, while smoldered to a name
Sardanapalus' Nineveh.

Within thy shadow, haply, once
Sennacherib has knelt, whose sons
Smote him between the altar-stones;
Or pale Semiramis her zones
Of gold, her incense brought to thee,
In love for grace, in war for aid . . .
Aye, and who else? . . . till 'neath thy shade
Within his trenches newly made
Last year the Christian knelt and prayed —
Not to thy strength — in Nineveh.

Now, thou poor god, within this hall
Where the blank windows blind the wall
From pedestal to pedestal,
The kind of light shall on thee fall
Which London takes the day to be;
While school-foundations in the act
Of holiday, three files compact,
Shall learn to view thee as a fact
Connected with that zealous tract:
"Rome — Babylon and Nineveh."

Deemed they of this, those worshipers,
When, in some mythic chain of verse
Which man shall not again rehearse,
The faces of thy ministers
Yearned pale with bitter ecstasy?
Greece, Egypt, Rome — did any god
Before whose feet men knelt unshod
Deem that in this unblest abode
Another scarce more unknown god
Should house with him, from Nineveh?

Ah! in what quarries lay the stone
From which this pygmy pile has grown,
Unto man's need how long unknown,
Since thy vast temples, court, and cone,
Rose far in desert history?
Ah! what is here that does not lie
All strange to thine awakened eye?
Ah! what is here can testify
(Save that dumb presence of the sky)
Unto thy day and Nineveh?

Why, of those mummies in the room
Above, there might indeed have come
One out of Egypt to thy home,
An alien. Nay, but were not some
Of these thine own "antiquity"?
And now — they and their gods and thou
All relics here together — now
Whose profit? whether bull or cow,
Isis or Ibis, who or how,
Whether of Thebes or Nineveh?

The consecrated metals found,
And ivory tablets, underground,
Winged teraphim and creatures crowned
When air and daylight filled the mound,
Fell into dust immediately.
And even as these, the images
Of awe and worship — even as these —
So, smitten with the sun's increase,
Her glory moldered and did cease
From immemorial Nineveh.

The day her builders made their halt,
Those cities of the lake of salt

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53. **Jonah . . . gourd.** Angry because the repentant city of Nineveh was not to be destroyed by the Lord, Jonah "went out of the city and sat on the east side . . . And the Lord God prepared a gourd and made it to come up over Jonah that it might be a shadow over his head to deliver him from his grief" (*Jonah*, 4:5-6). 60. **Sardanapalus,** the Greek name of the last great Assyrian king, Assurbanipal (8th century B.C.). According to tradition he burned his wives, his treasures, and himself to avoid capture by the enemy. 62. **Sennacherib,** king of Assyria (705-681 B.C.); a great warrior and builder of Nineveh. His palace was discovered by the excavators of 1846-51. 64. **Semiramis,** a famous queen of Assyria; according to legend, the half-divine wife and successor of Ninus, the founder of Nineveh, c. 2000 B.C. 69. **Last year . . . prayed.** During the excavations the workmen conducted their worship in the shadow of the great bulls.

76. **school-foundations,** endowed schools. 109. **Isis,** the chief Egyptian goddess, sometimes represented with the head of a cow. **Ibis,** the sacred ibis, a wading bird venerated by the Egyptians. 110. **Thebes,** the ancient capital of Upper Egypt, on the Nile. 113. **teraphim,** household idols. 122. **cities . . . salt,** the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, situated in the plain of the Jordan River, which flowed into the Dead Sea (Salt Sea) southwest of Jerusalem. The cities were destroyed because of their wickedness. (See *Genesis*, 13:10-13; 19:1-29.)

Stood firmly 'stablished without fault,
Made proud with pillars of basalt,
With sardonyx and porphyry.
The day that Jonah bore abroad
To Nineveh the voice of God,
A brackish lake lay in his road,
Where erst Pride fixed her sure abode,
As then in royal Nineveh.

The day when he, Pride's lord and Man's,
Showed all the kingdoms at a glance
To Him before whose countenance
The years recede, the years advance,
And said, Fall down and worship me —
'Mid all the pomp beneath that look,
Then stirred there, haply, some rebuke,
Where to the wind the salt pools shook,
And in those tracts, of life forsook,
That knew thee not, O Nineveh!

Delicate harlot! On thy throne
Thou with a world beneath thee prone
In state for ages sat'st alone;
And needs were years and lusters flown
Ere strength of man could vanquish thee,
Whom even thy victor foes must bring,
Still royal, among maids that sing
As with doves' voices, taboring
Upon their breasts, unto the King —
A kingly conquest, Nineveh!

. . . Here woke my thought. The wind's slow sway
Had waxed; and like the human play
Of scorn that smiling spreads away,
The sunshine shivered off the day;
The callous wind, it seemed to me,
Swept up the shadow from the ground;
And pale as whom the Fates astound,
The god forlorn stood winged and crowned;
Within I knew the cry lay bound
Of the dumb soul of Nineveh.

And as I turned, my sense half shut
Still saw the crowds of curb and rut
Go past as marshaled to the strut
Of ranks in gypsum quaintly cut.
It seemed in one same pageantry
They followed forms which had been erst;
To pass, till on my sight should burst
That future of the best or worst
When some may question which was first,
Of London or of Nineveh.

For as that Bull-god once did stand
And watched the burial-clouds of sand,
Till these at last without a hand
Rose o'er his eyes, another land,
And blinded him with destiny —
So may he stand again; till now,
In ships of unknown sail and prow,
Some tribe of the Australian plow
Bear him afar — a relic now
Of London, not of Nineveh!

Or it may chance indeed that when
Man's age is hoary among men —
His centuries threescore and ten —
His furthest childhood shall seem then
More clear than later times may be;
Who, finding in this desert place
This form, shall hold us for some race
That walked not in Christ's lowly ways,
But bowed its pride and vowed its praise
Unto the god of Nineveh.

The smile rose first — anon drew nigh
The thought: . . . Those heavy wings spread high
So sure of flight, which do not fly;
That set gaze never on the sky;
Those scriptured flanks it cannot see;
Its crown, a brow-contracting load;
Its planted feet which trust the sod: . . .
(So grew the image as I trod)
O Nineveh, was this thy God —
Thine also, mighty Nineveh?

(1870)

## THE STAFF AND SCRIP

"Who owns these lands?" the Pilgrim said.
"Stranger, Queen Blanchelys."
"And who has thus harried them?" he said.
"It was Duke Luke did this;
God's ban be his!"

The Pilgrim said: "Where is your house?
I'll rest there, with your will."
"You've but to climb these blackened boughs
And you'll see it over the hill,
For it burns still."

"Which road, to seek your Queen?" said he.
"Nay, nay, but with some wound
You'll fly back hither, it may be,
And by your blood i' the ground
My place be found."

"Friend, stay in peace. God keep your head,
And mine, where I will go;

---

127. **voice of God.** Jonah was commanded to go to Nineveh and "cry against it" because of its wickedness. As he entered the city he said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (*Jonah*, 3:4). 148. **taboring,** striking lightly, as upon a tabor (a small drum). 162. **crowds of curb and rut,** crowds of common people—those of the curbstone and gutter.

*The Staff and Scrip.* This poem is based upon a story in the *Gesta Romanorum* (*Deeds of the Romans*), a famous collection of short tales in Latin, popular during the late Middle Ages. All pilgrims carried staff and scrip (a small bag).
5. **ban,** curse.

For He is here and there," he said.
He passed the hillside, slow,
And stood below.

The Queen sat idle by her loom;
She heard the arras stir,
And looked up sadly; through the room
The sweetness sickened her
Of musk and myrrh.

Her women, standing two and two,
In silence combed the fleece.
The Pilgrim said, "Peace be with you,
Lady," and bent his knees.
She answered, "Peace."

Her eyes were like the wave within;
Like water-reeds the poise
Of her soft body, dainty thin;
And like the water's noise
Her plaintive voice.

For him, the stream had never welled
In desert tracts malign
So sweet; nor had he ever felt
So faint in the sunshine
Of Palestine.

Right so, he knew that he saw weep
Each night through every dream
The Queen's own face, confused in sleep
With visages supreme
Not known to him.

"Lady," he said, "your lands lie burnt
And waste. To meet your foe
All fear; this I have seen and learnt.
Say that it shall be so,
And I will go."

She gazed at him. "Your cause is just,
For I have heard the same."
He said: "God's strength shall be my trust.
Fall it to good or grame,
'Tis in His name."

"Sir, you are thanked. My cause is dead.
Why should you toil to break
A grave, and fall therein?" she said.
He did not pause but spake:
"For my vow's sake."

"Can such vows be, sir — to God's ear,
Not to God's will?" "My vow
Remains; God heard me there as here,"
He said with reverent brow,
"Both then and now."

They gazed together, he and she,
The minute while he spoke;
And when he ceased, she suddenly
Looked round upon her folk
As though she woke.

"Fight, sir," she said; "my prayers in pain
Shall be your fellowship."
He whispered one among her train —
"Tomorrow bid her keep
This staff and scrip."

She sent him a sharp sword, whose belt
About his body there
As sweet as her own arms he felt.
He kissed its blade, all bare,
Instead of her.

She sent him a green banner wrought
With one white lily stem,
To bind his lance with when he fought.
He writ upon the same
And kissed her name.

She sent him a white shield, whereon
She bade that he should trace
His will. He blent fair hues that shone,
And in a golden space
He kissed her face.

Right so, the sunset skies unsealed,
Like lands he never knew,
Beyond tomorrow's battlefield
Lay open out of view
To ride into.

Next day till dark the women prayed;
Nor any might know there
How the fight went — the Queen has bade
That there do come to her
No messenger.

Weak now to them the voice o' the priest
As any trance affords;
And when each anthem failed and ceased,
It seemed that the last chords
Still sang the words.

Lo, Father, is thine ear inclined,
And hath thine angel passed?
For these thy watchers now are blind
With vigil, and at last
Dizzy with fast.

"Oh, what is the light that shines so red?
'Tis long since the sun set";
Quoth the youngest to the eldest maid:
" 'Twas dim but now, and yet
The light is great."

Quoth the other: " 'Tis our sight is dazed
That we see flame i' the air."

---

54. **grame**, harm, sorrow.

But the Queen held her brows and gazed,
And said, "It is the glare
Of torches there."

"Oh, what are the sounds that rise and spread?
All day it was so still";
Quoth the youngest to the eldest maid:
"Unto the furthest hill
The air they fill."

Quoth the other: " 'Tis our sense is blurred
With all the chants gone by."
But the Queen held her breath and heard,
And said, "It is the cry
Of victory."

The first of all the rout was sound,
The next were dust and flame,
And then the horses shook the ground;
And in the thick of them
A still band came.

"Oh, what do ye bring out of the fight,
Thus hid beneath these boughs?"
"Even him, thy conquering guest tonight,
Who yet shall not carouse,
Queen, in thy house."

"Uncover ye his face," she said.
"O changed in little space!"
She cried, "O pale that was so red!
O God, O God of grace!
Cover his face."

His sword was broken in his hand
Where he had kissed the blade.
"O soft steel that could not withstand!
O my hard heart unstayed,
That prayed and prayed!"

His bloodied banner crossed his mouth
Where he had kissed her name.
"O east, and west, and north, and south,
Fair flew my web, for shame,
To guide Death's aim!"

The tints were shredded from his shield
Where he had kissed her face.
"Oh, of all gifts that I could yield,
Death only keeps its place,
My gift and grace!"

Then stepped a damsel to her side,
And spoke, and needs must weep:
"For his sake, lady, if he died,
He prayed of thee to keep
This staff and scrip."

That night they hung above her bed,
Till morning wet with tears.
Year after year above her head
Her bed his token wears,
Five years, ten years.

That night the passion of her grief
Shook them as there they hung.
Each year the wind that shed the leaf
Shook them and in its tongue
A message flung.

And once she woke with a clear mind
That letters writ to calm
Her soul lay in the scrip; to find
Only a torpid balm
And dust of palm.

They shook far off with palace sport
When just and dance were rife;
And the hunt shook them from the court;
For hers, in peace or strife,
Was a queen's life.

A queen's death now; as now they shake
To gusts in chapel dim —
Hung where she sleeps, not seen to wake
(Carved lovely white and slim),
With them by him.

Stand up today, still armed, with her,
Good knight, before His brow
Who then as now was here and there,
Who had in mind thy vow
Then even as now.

The lists are set in heaven today,
The bright pavilions shine;
Fair hangs thy shield, and none gainsay;
The trumpets sound in sign
That she is thine.

Not tithed with days' and years' decease
He pays thy wage He owed,
But with imperishable peace
Here in His own abode,
Thy jealous God. (*1849-1853;* 1870)

## SISTER HELEN

"Why did you melt your waxen man,
Sister Helen?
Today is the third since you began."
"The time was long, yet the time ran,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Three days today, between Hell and Heaven!*)

---

**201 ff. Not tithed, etc.** His reward is not to be limited in time but is to be everlasting.

*Sister Helen.* This poem is founded upon the old superstition that burning a waxen image of a person will bring suffering and death upon him. The false lover whom Helen is punishing is Keith of Ewern (line 87).

"But if you have done your work aright,
Sister Helen,
You'll let me play, for you said I might."
"Be very still in your play tonight,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Third night, tonight, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"You said it must melt ere vesper-bell,
Sister Helen;
If now it be molten, all is well."
"Even so — nay, peace! you cannot tell,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Oh, what is this, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"Oh, the waxen knave was plump today,
Sister Helen;
How like dead folk he has dropped away!"
"Nay now, of the dead what can you say,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*What of the dead, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"See, see, the sunken pile of wood,
Sister Helen,
Shines through the thinned wax red as blood!"
"Nay now, when looked you yet on blood,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*How pale she is, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Now close your eyes, for they're sick and sore,
Sister Helen,
And I'll play without the gallery door."
"Aye, let me rest — I'll lie on the floor,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*What rest tonight, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"Here high up in the balcony,
Sister Helen,
The moon flies face to face with me."
"Aye, look and say whatever you see,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*What sight tonight, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"Outside it's merry in the wind's wake,
Sister Helen;
In the shaken trees the chill stars shake."
"Hush, heard you a horse-tread as you spake,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*What sound tonight, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"I hear a horse-tread, and I see,
Sister Helen,
Three horsemen that ride terribly."
"Little brother, whence come the three,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Whence should they come, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"They come by the hill-verge from Boyne Bar,
Sister Helen,
And one draws nigh, but two are afar."
"Look, look, do you know them who they are,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Who should they be, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"Oh, it's Keith of Eastholm rides so fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white mane on the blast."
"The hour has come, has come at last,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Her hour at last, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"He has made a sign and called Halloo!
Sister Helen,
And he says that he would speak with you."
"Oh, tell him I fear the frozen dew,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Why laughs she thus, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"The wind is loud, but I hear him cry,
Sister Helen,
That Keith of Ewern's like to die."
"And he and thou, and thou and I,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*And they and we, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Three days ago, on his marriage-morn,
Sister Helen,
He sickened, and lies since then forlorn."
"For bridegroom's side is the bride a thorn,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Cold bridal cheer, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Three days and nights now he has lain abed,
Sister Helen,
And he prays in torment to be dead."
"The thing may chance, if he have prayed,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*If he have prayed, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"But he has not ceased to cry today,
Sister Helen,
That you should take your curse away."

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64. **Boyne Bar**, a famous bar at the mouth of the Boyne River, Leinster, Ireland.

"*My* prayer was heard — he need but pray,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Shall God not hear, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"But he says, till you take back your ban,
Sister Helen,
His soul would pass, yet never can."
"Nay then, shall I slay a living man,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*A living soul, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"But he calls forever on your name,
Sister Helen,
And says that he melts before a flame."
"My heart for his pleasure fared the same,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Fire at the heart, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Here's Keith of Westholm riding fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white plume on the blast."
"The hour, the sweet hour I forecast,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Is the hour sweet, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"He stops to speak, and he stills his horse,
Sister Helen;
But his words are drowned in the wind's course."
"Nay hear, nay hear, you must hear perforce,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*What word now heard, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Oh, he says that Keith of Ewern's cry,
Sister Helen,
Is ever to see you ere he die."
"In all that his soul sees, there am I,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*The soul's one sight, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"He sends a ring and a broken coin,
Sister Helen,
And bids you mind the banks of Boyne."
"What else he broke will he ever join,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*No, never joined, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"He yields you these and craves full fain,
Sister Helen,
You pardon him in his mortal pain."
"What else he took will he give again,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Not twice to give, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"He calls your name in an agony,
Sister Helen,
That even dead Love must weep to see."
"Hate, born of Love, is blind as he,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Love turned to hate, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Oh, it's Keith of Keith now that rides fast,
Sister Helen,
For I know the white hair on the blast."
"The short, short hour will soon be past,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Will soon be past, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"He looks at me and he tries to speak,
Sister Helen,
But oh! his voice is sad and weak!"
"What here should the mighty Baron seek,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Is this the end, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"Oh, his son still cries, if you forgive,
Sister Helen,
The body dies, but the soul shall live."
"Fire shall forgive me as I forgive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*As she forgives, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Oh, he prays you, as his heart would rive,
Sister Helen,
To save his dear son's soul alive."
"Fire cannot slay it; it shall thrive,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Alas, alas, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"He cries to you, kneeling in the road,
Sister Helen,
To go with him for the love of God!"
"The way is long to his son's abode,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*The way is long, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"A lady's here, by a dark steed brought,
Sister Helen,
So darkly clad, I saw her not."
"See her now or never see aught,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*)
*What more to see, between Hell and Heaven!*

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148. **broken coin.** The two had broken a coin, and each had kept half as a pledge.

"Her hood falls back, and the moon shines fair,
Sister Helen,
On the Lady of Ewern's golden hair."
"Blest hour of my power and her despair,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Hour blest and banned, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Pale, pale her cheeks, that in pride did glow,
Sister Helen,
'Neath the bridal-wreath three days ago."
"One morn for pride and three days for woe,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Three days, three nights, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Her clasped hands stretch from her bending head,
Sister Helen;
With the loud wind's wail her sobs are wed."
"What wedding-strains hath her bridal-bed,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*What strain but death's, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"She may not speak, she sinks in a swoon,
Sister Helen—
She lifts her lips and gasps on the moon."
"Oh! might I but hear her soul's blithe tune,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Her woe's dumb cry, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"They've caught her to Westholm's saddle-bow,
Sister Helen,
And her moonlit hair gleams white in its flow."
"Let it turn whiter than winter snow,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Woe-withered gold, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"O Sister Helen, you heard the bell,
Sister Helen!
More loud than the vesper-chime it fell."
"No vesper-chime, but a dying knell,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*His dying knell, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Alas! but I fear the heavy sound,
Sister Helen;
Is it in the sky or in the ground?"
"Say, have they turned their horses round,
Little brother?"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*What would she more, between Hell and Heaven?*)

"They have raised the old man from his knee,
Sister Helen,
And they ride in silence hastily."
"More fast the naked soul doth flee,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*The naked soul, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Flank to flank are the three steeds gone,
Sister Helen,
But the lady's dark steed goes alone."
"And lonely her bridegroom's soul hath flown,
Little brother."
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*The lonely ghost, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Oh, the wind is sad in the iron chill,
Sister Helen,
And weary sad they look by the hill."
"But Keith of Ewern's sadder still,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Most sad of all, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"See, see, the wax has dropped from its place,
Sister Helen,
And the flames are winning up apace!"
"Yet here they burn but for a space,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Here for a space, between Hell and Heaven!*)

"Ah! what white thing at the door has crossed,
Sister Helen?
Ah! what is this that sighs in the frost?"
"A soul that's lost as mine is lost,
Little brother!"
(*O Mother, Mary Mother,*
*Lost, lost, all lost, between Hell and Heaven!*)
(*1851-1852;* 1853, 1870)

## PENUMBRA

I did not look upon her eyes
(Though scarcely seen, with no surprise,
'Mid many eyes a single look),
Because they should not gaze rebuke,
At night, from stars in sky and brook.

---

*Penumbra.* A penumbra is a partial shadow.

I did not take her by the hand
(Though little was to understand
From touch of hand all friends might take),
Because it should not prove a flake
Burnt in my palm to boil and ache.

I did not listen to her voice
(Though none had noted, where at choice
All might rejoice in listening),
Because no such a thing should cling
In the wood's moan at evening.

I did not cross her shadow once
(Though from the hollow west the sun's
Last shadow runs along so far),
Because in June it should not bar
My ways, at noon when fevers are.

They told me she was sad that day
(Though wherefore tell what love's soothsay,
Sooner than they, did register?),
And my heart leapt and wept to her,
And yet I did not speak nor stir.

So shall the tongues of the sea's foam
(Though many voices therewith come
From drowned hope's home to cry to me),
Bewail one hour the more, when sea
And wind are one with memory. (1870)

## FIRST LOVE REMEMBERED

Peace in her chamber, wheresoe'er
It be, a holy place;
The thought still brings my soul such grace
As morning meadows wear.

Whether it still be small and light,
A maid's who dreams alone,
As from her orchard-gate the moon
Its ceiling showed at night;

Or whether, in a shadow dense
As nuptial hymns invoke,
Innocent maidenhood awoke
To married innocence —

There still the thanks unheard await
The unconscious gift bequeathed;
For there my soul this hour has breathed
An air inviolate.

(1870)

## SUDDEN LIGHT

I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell.
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before —
How long ago I may not know;
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turned so,
Some veil did fall — I knew it all of yore.

Has this been thus before?
And shall not thus time's eddying flight
Still with our lives our loves restore
In death's despite,
And day and night yield one delight once more?

(1870)

## THE WOODSPURGE

The wind flapped loose, the wind was still,
Shaken out dead from tree and hill;
I had walked on at the wind's will —
I sat now, for the wind was still.

Between my knees my forehead was —
My lips, drawn in, said not Alas!
My hair was over in the grass,
My naked ears heard the day pass.

My eyes, wide open, had the run
Of some ten weeds to fix upon;
Among those few, out of the sun,
The woodspurge flowered, three cups in one.

From perfect grief there need not be
Wisdom or even memory;
One thing then learned remains to me —
The woodspurge has a cup of three. (1870)

## THE HONEYSUCKLE

I plucked a honeysuckle where
The hedge on high is quick with thorn,
And climbing for the prize, was torn,
And fouled my feet in quag-water;
And by the thorns and by the wind
The blossom that I took was thinned,
And yet I found it sweet and fair.

Thence to a richer growth I came,
Where, nursed in mellow intercourse,
The honeysuckles sprang by scores,
Not harried like my single stem,
All virgin lamps of scent and dew.
So from my hand that first I threw,
Yet plucked not any more of them.

(1870)

*The Woodspurge.* Woodspurge is a species of weed that exudes a milky fluid. Rossetti wrote the poem after he noticed a drawing of the plant in a botanical book.

## THE SONG OF THE BOWER

Say, is it day, is it dusk in thy bower,
Thou whom I long for, who longest for me?
Oh! be it light, be it night, 'tis Love's hour,
Love's that is fettered as Love's that is free,
Free Love has leaped to that innermost chamber,
Oh! the last time, and the hundred before;
Fettered Love, motionless, can but remember,
Yet something that sighs from him passes the door.

Nay, but my heart when it flies to thy bower,
What does it find there that knows it again?
There it must droop like a shower-beaten flower,
Red at the rent core and dark with the rain.
Ah! yet what shelter is still shed above it —
What waters still image its leaves torn apart?
Thy soul is the shade that clings round it to love it,
And tears are its mirror deep down in thy heart.

What were my prize, could I enter thy bower,
This day, tomorrow, at eve or at morn?
Large lovely arms and a neck like a tower,
Bosom then heaving that now lies forlorn.
Kindled with love-breath (the sun's kiss is colder!)
Thy sweetness all near me, so distant today;
My hand round thy neck and thy hand on my shoulder,
My mouth to thy mouth as the world melts away.

What is it keeps me afar from thy bower —
My spirit, my body, so fain to be there?
Waters engulfing or fires that devour? —
Earth heaped against me or death in the air?
Nay, but in day-dreams, for terror, for pity,
The trees wave their heads with an omen to tell;
Nay, but in night-dreams, throughout the dark city,
The hours, clashed together, lose count in the bell.

Shall I not one day remember thy bower,
One day when all days are one day to me?
Thinking, "I stirred not, and yet had the power" —
Yearning, "Ah, God, if again it might be!"
Peace, peace! such a small lamp illumes, on this highway,
So dimly so few steps in front of my feet —
Yet shows me that her way is parted from my way. . . .
Out of sight, beyond light, at what goal may we meet?

(1870)

## AN OLD SONG ENDED

*"How should I your true love know*
*From another one?"*
*"By his cockle-hat and staff*
*And his sandal-shoon."*

"And what signs have told you now
That he hastens home?"
"Lo! the spring is nearly gone,
He is nearly come."

"For a token is there naught,
Say, that he should bring?"
"He will bear a ring I gave
And another ring."

"How may I, when he shall ask,
Tell him who lies there?"
"Nay, but leave my face unveiled
And unbound my hair."

"Can you say to me some word
I shall say to him?"
"Say I'm looking in his eyes
Though my eyes are dim."

## ASPECTA MEDUSA

(*For a Drawing*)

Andromeda, by Perseus saved and wed,
Hankered each day to see the Gorgon's head;
Till o'er a fount he held it, bade her lean,
And mirrored in the wave was safely seen
That death she lived by.

Let not thine eyes know
Any forbidden thing itself, although
It once should save as well as kill; but be
Its shadow upon life enough for thee.

(*1865*; 1870)

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*An Old Song Ended.* The first stanza is quoted from Ophelia's song in *Hamlet*, IV, 5, 23-26.

*Aspecta Medusa.* These lines were written for a design from which Rossetti intended to paint a picture of Perseus allowing Andromeda to look at the severed head of Medusa as it was reflected from a tank of water. The picture, however, was never painted. Medusa was one of the Gorgons, fabulous monsters with snaky hair and of terrible aspect that turned the beholder to stone. Perseus, the son of Zeus, king of the gods, cut off Medusa's head by looking at its reflection in his shield. Andromeda was the daughter of Cassiopeia, king of Ethiopia. In order to expiate a curse upon her father's land, she was chained to a cliff to be devoured by a monster. Perseus slew the monster and married Andromeda.

## EDEN BOWER

It was Lilith the wife of Adam;
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Not a drop of her blood was human,
But she was made like a soft sweet woman.

Lilith stood on the skirts of Eden;
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
She was the first that thence was driven;
With her was hell and with Eve was heaven.

In the ear of the Snake said Lilith:
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
"To thee I come when the rest is over;
A snake was I when thou wast my lover.

"I was the fairest snake in Eden;
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
By the earth's will, new form and feature
Made me a wife for the earth's new creature.

"Take me thou as I come from Adam.
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Once again shall my love subdue thee;
The past is past and I am come to thee.

"O but Adam was thrall to Lilith!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
All the threads of my hair are golden,
And there in a net his heart was holden.

"O and Lilith was queen of Adam!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
All the day and the night together
My breath could shake his soul like a feather.

"What great joys had Adam and Lilith!—
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Sweet close rings of the serpent's twining,
As heart in heart lay sighing and pining.

"What bright babes had Lilith and Adam!—
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Shapes that coiled in the woods and waters,
Glittering sons and radiant daughters.

"O thou God, the Lord God of Eden!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Say, was this fair body for no man,
That of Adam's flesh thou mak'st him a woman?

"O thou Snake, the King-snake of Eden!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
God's strong will our necks are under,
But thou and I may cleave it in sunder.

"Help, sweet Snake, sweet lover of Lilith!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
And let God learn how I loved and hated
Man in the image of God created.

"Help me once against Eve and Adam!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Help me once for this one endeavor,
And then my love shall be thine forever!

"Strong is God, the fell foe of Lilith—
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Naught in heaven or earth may affright him;
But join thou with me and we will smite him.

"Strong is God, the great God of Eden;
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Over all He made He hath power;
But lend me thou thy shape for an hour!

"Lend thy shape for the love of Lilith!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Look, my mouth and my cheek are ruddy,
And thou art cold, and fire is my body.

"Lend thy shape for the hate of Adam!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
That he may wail my joy that forsook him,
And curse the day when the bride-sleep took him.

"Lend thy shape for the shame of Eden!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Is not the foe-God weak as the foeman
When love grows hate in the heart of a woman?

"Would'st thou know the heart's hope of Lilith?
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Then bring thou close thine head till it glisten
Along my breast, and lip me and listen.

"Am I sweet, O sweet Snake of Eden?
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Then ope thine ear to my warm mouth's cooing
And learn what deed remains for our doing.

"Thou didst hear when God said to Adam:
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
'Of all this wealth I have made thee warden;
Thou'rt free to eat of the trees of the garden;

"'Only of one tree eat not in Eden;
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
All save one I give to thy freewill—
The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.'

"O my love, come nearer to Lilith!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)

---

*Eden Bower.* This poem is based upon an ancient legend that regarded Lilith as the first wife of Adam. Cf. Browning's *Adam, Lilith, and Eve*, page 352.

In thy sweet folds bind me and bend me,
And let me feel the shape thou shalt lend me!

"In thy shape I'll go back to Eden;
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
In these coils that Tree will I grapple,
And stretch this crowned head forth by the apple.

"Lo, Eve bends to the breath of Lilith!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
O how then shall my heart desire
All her blood as food to its fire!

"Lo, Eve bends to the words of Lilith! —
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
'Nay, this Tree's fruit — why should ye hate it,
Or Death be born the day that ye ate it?

" 'Nay, but on that great day in Eden,
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
By the help that in this wise Tree is,
God knows well ye shall be as He is.'

"Then Eve shall eat and give unto Adam;
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
And then they both shall know they are naked,
And their hearts ache as my heart hath achéd.

"Aye, let them hide in the trees of Eden,
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
As in the cool of the day in the garden
God shall walk without pity or pardon.

"Hear, thou Eve, the man's heart in Adam!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Of his brave words hark to the bravest:
'This the woman gave that thou gavest.'

"Hear Eve speak, yea, list to her, Lilith!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Feast thine heart with words that shall sate it —
'This the serpent gave and I ate it.'

"O proud Eve, cling close to thine Adam,
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Driven forth as the beasts of his naming
By the sword that forever is flaming.

"Know, thy path is known unto Lilith!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
While the blithe birds sang at thy wedding.
There her tears grew thorns for thy threading.

"O my love, thou Love-snake of Eden!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
O today and the day to come after!
Loose me, love — give breath to my laughter!

"O bright Snake, the Death-worm of Adam!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Wreathe thy neck with my hair's bright tether,
And wear my gold and thy gold together!

"On that day on the skirts of Eden,
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
In thy shape shall I glide back to thee,
And in my shape for an instant view thee.

"But when thou'rt thou and Lilith is Lilith,
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
In what bliss past hearing or seeing
Shall each one drink of the other's being!

"With cries of 'Eve!' and 'Eden!' and 'Adam!'
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
How shall we mingle our love's caresses,
I in thy coils, and thou in my tresses!

"With those names, ye echoes of Eden,
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Fire shall cry from my heart that burneth —
'Dust he is and to dust returneth!'

"Yet today, thou master of Lilith —
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Wrap me round in the form I'll borrow
And let me tell thee of sweet tomorrow.

"In the planted garden eastward in Eden,
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Where the river goes forth to water the garden,
The springs shall dry and the soil shall harden.

"Yea, where the bride-sleep fell upon Adam,
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
None shall hear when the storm-wind whistles
Through roses choked among thorns and thistles.

"Yea, beside the east-gate of Eden,
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Where God joined them and none might sever
The sword turns this way and that forever.

"What of Adam cast out of Eden?
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Lo! with care like a shadow shaken,
He tills the hard earth whence he was taken.

"What of Eve too, cast out of Eden?
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
Nay, but she, the bride of God's giving,
Must yet be mother of all men living.

---

156. **Dust . . . returneth.** Cf. *Ecclesiastes*, 3:20.—"All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

"Lo, God's grace, by the grace of Lilith!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
To Eve's womb, from our sweet tomorrow,
God shall greatly multiply sorrow.

"Fold me fast, O God-snake of Eden!
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
What more prize than love to impel thee?
Grip and lip my limbs as I tell thee!

"Lo! two babes for Eve and for Adam!
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)
Lo! sweet Snake, the travail and treasure —
Two men-children born for their pleasure!

"The first is Cain and the second Abel;
(*Eden bower's in flower.*)
The soul of one shall be made thy brother,
And thy tongue shall lap the blood of the other."
(*And O the bower and the hour!*)

(1870)

## THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES

(FROM FRANÇOIS VILLON)

Tell me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
Neither of them the fairer woman?
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere —
She whose beauty was more than human . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Héloise, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
(From Love he won such dule and teen!)
And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who willed that Buridan should steer
Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
With a voice like any mermaiden —
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
And Ermengarde the lady of Maine —
And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouen doomed and burned her there —
Mother of God, where are they then? . . .
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Except with this for an overword —
But where are the snows of yester-year?

(*1869;* 1869)

## JOHN OF TOURS

(*Old French*)

John of Tours is back with peace,
But he comes home ill at ease.

"Good-morrow, mother." "Good-morrow, son;
Your wife has borne you a little one."

"Go now, mother, go before,
Make me a bed upon the floor;

"Very low your foot must fall,
That my wife hear not at all."

As it neared the midnight toll,
John of Tours gave up his soul.

"Tell me now, my mother my dear,
What's the crying that I hear?"

---

*The Ballad of Dead Ladies.* This is a translation of *Ballade des Dames du Temp Jadis*, by François Villon, the greatest of the French medieval poets. (See Swinburne's *A Ballad of François Villon*, page 715.) The next two poems are also translations from the Old French.

2. **Lady Flora**, perhaps the Roman goddess of flowers and spring; late tradition made her a wealthy and beautiful woman. Other identifications include several famous courtesans of Rome named Flora. 3. **Hipparchia**, the wife of Crates, the famous Cynic philosopher of Thebes, Greece. She lived during the 3d century B.C. **Thais**, perhaps the celebrated Athenian courtesan who accompanied Alexander the Great on his expedition into Asia, 331 B.C.; see Dryden's *Alexander's Feast.* Another Thais was the famous Egyptian courtesan who became a saint. 5. **Echo**, a beautiful nymph who for love of Narcissus pined away until nothing was left of her but her voice. 9. **Héloise**, the beautiful niece of Canon Fulbert, of Paris. She fell in love with her teacher, Pierre Abélard (1079-1142), a scholastic philosopher and theologian. After they eloped and were married, she returned to her uncle's house and denied the marriage in order that her love might not be a hindrance to Abélard's advancement in the church. Fulbert was so enraged at this move that he caused Abélard to be emasculated in order to make him canonically incapable of ecclesiastical preferment. Abélard then became a monk in the abbey of St. Denis, in Paris, and induced Héloise to become a nun. 10. **ween**, think. 12. **dule and teen**, grief and pain. 13. **the Queen**, Marguerite de Bourgogne, wife of Louis le Hutin (14th century). She is the heroine of the legend of the Tour de Nesle, according to which she had her numerous lovers killed and thrown into the Seine. Jean Buridan, rector of the University of Paris, escaped this fate. 17. **Queen Blanche**, probably Blanche of Castille, mother of Louis IX, king of France (1226-70). 19. **Bertha Broadfoot**, the mother of Charlemagne, king of the Franks and emperor of the West (742-814). She is a prominent character in medieval romances dealing with Charlemagne and his court. **Beatrice, Alice.** These were names of various well-known women of the Middle Ages, and it is impossible to tell the exact persons meant. Beatrice might be Dante's Beatrice (see *Dante at Verona*, page 507) or Béatrix de Provence, wife of Charles, son of Louis VIII, king of France (1223-26). Alice may be Ælis, one of the characters in the romance *Aliscans*, or Alix de Champagne, wife of Louis le Jeune (12th century). 20. **Ermengarde**, the daughter of d'Helie, Count of Maine, an old province in northwestern France. She was the wife of Foulques V, Count of Anjou. She died in 1126. 21. **Joan**, Joan of Arc (1412-31), who saved France from conquest, but who later was imprisoned at Rouen, France, by the English, convicted of witchcraft and heresy, and burned at the stake. She was canonized in 1920.

"Daughter, it's the children wake
Crying with their teeth that ache."

"Tell me though, my mother my dear,
What's the knocking that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the carpenter
Mending planks upon the stair."

"Tell me too, my mother my dear,
What's the singing that I hear?"

"Daughter, it's the priests in rows
Going round about our house."

"Tell me then, my mother my dear,
What's the dress that I should wear?"

"Daughter, any reds or blues,
But the black is most in use."

"Nay, but say, my mother my dear,
Why do you fall weeping here?"

"Oh! the truth must be said —
It's that John of Tours is dead."

"Mother, let the sexton know
That the grave must be for two;

"Aye, and still have room to spare,
For you must shut the baby there." (1870)

## MY FATHER'S CLOSE

(*Old French*)

Inside my father's close
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
Sweet apple-blossom blows
So sweet.

Three kings' daughters fair,
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
They lie below it there
So sweet.

"Ah!" says the eldest one,
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
"I think the day's begun
So sweet."

"Ah!" says the second one,
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
"Far off I hear the drum
So sweet."

"Ah!" says the youngest one,
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
"It's my true love, my own,
So sweet.

"Oh! if he fight and win,"
(Fly away, O my heart, away!)
"I keep my love for him,
So sweet;
Oh! let him lose or win,
He hath it still complete." (1870)

## MARY MAGDALENE

### AT THE DOOR OF SIMON THE PHARISEE

(*For a Drawing*)

"Why wilt thou cast the roses from thine hair?
Nay, be thou all a rose — wreath, lips, and cheek.
Nay, not this house — that banquet-house we seek;
See how they kiss and enter; come thou there.
This delicate day of love we two will share
Till at our ear love's whispering night shall speak.
What, sweet one — hold'st thou still the foolish freak?
Nay, when I kiss thy feet they'll leave the stair."
"Oh, loose me! See'st thou not my Bridegroom's face
That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss,
My hair, my tears He craves today — and oh!
What words can tell what other day and place
Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?
He needs me, calls me, loves me; let me go!"
(*1869?;* 1870)

## TROY TOWN

Heavenborn Helen, Sparta's queen,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Had two breasts of heavenly sheen,
The sun and moon of the heart's desire;
All Love's lordship lay between.
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

---

*My Father's Close.* A close is an enclosed place.

*Mary Magdalene.* When Jesus was being entertained at the home of Simon the Pharisee, "a woman in the city, which was a sinner . . . brought an alabaster box of ointment, And stood at his feet before him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment" (*Luke*, 7:37-38). For Rossetti's prose description of the picture see Critical Notes. In the drawing Mary has left a procession of revelers and is ascending the steps of the house where she sees Christ. Her lover has followed her and is trying to turn her back.

*Troy Town.* The theme of this poem is Helen's dedication of a goblet molded in the shape of her breast to Venus, goddess of love. The legend is found in Pliny (23-79 A.D.), a famous Roman historian and naturalist. For Helen's place in the story of Troy, see introductory note to Browning's *Development*, page 355.

Helen knelt at Venus' shrine,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Saying, "A little gift is mine,
A little gift for a heart's desire.
Hear me speak and make me a sign!
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

"Look, I bring thee a carven cup;
(*O Troy Town!*)
See it here as I hold it up —
Shaped it is to the heart's desire,
Fit to fill when the gods would sup.
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

"It was molded like my breast;
(*O Troy Town!*)
He that sees it may not rest,
Rest at all for his heart's desire.
O give ear to my heart's behest!
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

"See my breast, how like it is;
(*O Troy Town!*)
See it bare for the air to kiss!
Is the cup to thy heart's desire?
O for the breast, O make it his!
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

"Yea, for my bosom here I sue;
(*O Troy Town!*)
Thou must give it where 'tis due,
Give it there to the heart's desire.
Whom do I give my bosom to?
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

"Each twin breast is an apple sweet!
(*O Troy Town!*)
Once an apple stirred the beat
Of thy heart with the heart's desire;
Say, who brought it then to thy feet?
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

"They that claimed it then were three;
(*O Troy Town!*)
For thy sake two hearts did he
Make forlorn of the heart's desire.
Do for him as he did for thee!
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

"Mine are apples grown to the south,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Grown to taste in the days of drouth,
Taste and waste to the heart's desire;
Mine are apples meet for his mouth!"
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

Venus looked on Helen's gift,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Looked and smiled with subtle drift,
Saw the work of her heart's desire —
"There thou kneel'st for Love to lift!"
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

Venus looked in Helen's face,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Knew far off an hour and place,
And fire lit from the heart's desire;
Laughed and said, "Thy gift hath grace!"
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

Cupid looked on Helen's breast,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Saw the heart within its nest,
Saw the flame of the heart's desire —
Marked his arrow's burning crest.
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

Cupid took another dart,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Fledged it for another heart,
Winged the shaft with the heart's desire,
Drew the string and said, "Depart!"
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)

Paris turned upon his bed,
(*O Troy Town!*)
Turned upon his bed and said,
Dead at heart with the heart's desire —
"O to clasp her golden head!"
(*O Troy's down,*
*Tall Troy's on fire!*)
(1870)

## LOVE-LILY

Between the hands, between the brows,
Between the lips of Love-lily,
A spirit is born whose birth endows
My blood with fire to burn through me;
Who breathes upon my gazing eyes,
Who laughs and murmurs in mine ear,
At whose least touch my color flies,
And whom my life grows faint to hear.

Within the voice, within the heart,
Within the mind of Love-Lily,

---

45. **apple.** The golden apple marked "for the most beautiful" was awarded by Paris, son of King Priam, of Troy, to Venus. See Tennyson's *Œnone*, page 21, and note on line 79.

78. **Cupid**, the god of love.

A spirit is born who lifts apart
His tremulous wings and looks at me;
Who on my mouth his finger lays,
And shows, while whispering lutes confer,
That Eden of Love's watered ways
Whose winds and spirits worship her.

Brows, hands, and lips, heart, mind, and voice,
Kisses and words of Love-Lily —
Oh! bid me with your joy rejoice
Till riotous longing rest in me!
Ah! let not hope be still distraught,
But find in her its gracious goal,
Whose speech Truth knows not from her thought,
Nor Love her body from her soul.
(*1869;* 1870)

## From *THE HOUSE OF LIFE*

### THE SONNET

*A sonnet is a moment's monument —*
*Memorial from the Soul's eternity*
*To one dead deathless hour. Look that it be,*
*Whether for lustral rite or dire portent,*
*Of its own arduous fullness reverent.*
*Carve it in ivory or in ebony,*
*As Day or Night may rule; and let Time see*
*Its flowering crest impearled and orient.*
*A sonnet is a coin; its face reveals*
*The Soul — its converse, to what Power 'tis due: —*
*Whether for tribute to the august appeals*
*Of Life, or dower in Love's high retinue,*
*It serve; or 'mid the dark wharf's cavernous breath,*
*In Charon's palm it pay the toll to Death.*
(*1880;* 1881)

### From PART I. YOUTH AND CHANGE

### 1. LOVE ENTHRONED

I marked all kindred Powers the heart finds fair:
Truth, with awed lips; and Hope, with eyes upcast;
And Fame, whose loud wings fan the ashen Past
To signal-fires, Oblivion's flight to scare;
And Youth, with still some single golden hair
Unto his shoulder clinging, since the last
Embrace wherein two sweet arms held him fast;
And Life, still wreathing flowers for Death to wear.
Love's throne was not with these; but far above
All passionate wind of welcome and farewell
He sat in breathless bowers they dream not of;
Though Truth foreknow Love's heart, and Hope foretell,
And Fame be for Love's sake desirable,
And Youth be dear, and Life be sweet to Love.
(1881)

### 2. BRIDAL BIRTH

As when desire, long darkling, dawns, and first
The mother looks upon the new-born child,
Even so my Lady stood at gaze and smiled
When her soul knew at length the Love it nursed.
Born with her life, creature of poignant thirst
And exquisite hunger, at her heart Love lay
Quickening in darkness, till a voice that day
Cried on him, and the bonds of birth were burst.
Now, shadowed by his wings, our faces yearn
Together, as his fullgrown feet now range
The grove, and his warm hands our couch prepare;
Till to his song our bodiless souls in turn
Be born his children, when Death's nuptial change
Leaves us for light the halo of his hair. (1870)

### 3. LOVE'S TESTAMENT

O thou who at Love's hour ecstatically
Unto my heart dost ever more present,
Clothed with his fire, thy heart his testament;
Whom I have neared and felt thy breath to be
The inmost incense of his sanctuary;
Who without speech hast owned him, and, intent
Upon his will, thy life with mine hast blent,
And murmured, "I am thine, thou'rt one with me!"
O what from thee the grace, to me the prize,
And what to Love the glory — when the whole
Of the deep stair thou tread'st to the dim shoal
And weary water of the place of sighs,
And there dost work deliverance, as thine eyes
Draw up my prisoned spirit to thy soul!
(1870)

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*The House of Life.* These sonnets were written during a period of thirty-three years—1848-81. Although they do not form an organic whole, they fulfill the mission indicated in the introductory sonnet. The title came from Rossetti's interest in astrology, as if the heavens were regarded as divided into "houses," the most important of which was the "house of human life." The sonnets are largely autobiographical. They were mainly inspired by Elizabeth Siddal, with whom Rossetti fell deeply in love in 1850 and whom he married in 1860.

*The Sonnet.* See Critical Notes.

4. **lustral rite,** ceremony of purification. 14. **Charon . . . Death.** Charon was the boatman who ferried the souls of the dead over the Styx, one of the rivers of Hades. His pay was a coin found in the mouth of the passenger.

### 4. LOVESIGHT

When do I see thee most, beloved one?
When in the light the spirits of mine eyes
Before thy face, their altar, solemnize
The worship of that Love through thee made known?
Of when in the dusk hours (we two alone)
Close-kissed and eloquent of still replies
Thy twilight-hidden glimmering visage lies,
And my soul only sees thy soul its own?
O love, my love! if I no more should see
Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow of thee,
Nor image of thine eyes in any spring —
How then should sound upon Life's darkening slope
The ground-whirl of the perished leaves of Hope,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing?
(1870)

### 5. HEART'S HOPE

By what word's power, the key of paths untrod,
Shall I the difficult deeps of Love explore,
Till parted waves of Song yield up the shore
Even as that sea which Israel crossed dryshod?
For lo! in some poor rhythmic period,
Lady, I fain would tell how evermore
Thy soul I know not from thy body, nor
Thee from myself, neither our love from God.
Yea, in God's name, and Love's, and thine, would I
Draw from one loving heart such evidence
As to all hearts all things shall signify;
Tender as dawn's first hill-fire, and intense
As instantaneous penetrating sense,
In Spring's birth-hour, of other Springs gone by.
(1881)

### 7. SUPREME SURRENDER

To all the spirits of Love that wander by
Along his love-sown harvest-field of sleep
My lady lies apparent; and the deep
Calls to the deep; and no man sees but I.
The bliss so long afar, at length so nigh,
Rests there attained. Methinks proud Love must weep
When Fate's control doth from his harvest reap
The sacred hour for which the years did sigh.
First touched, the hand now warm around my neck
Taught memory long to mock desire — and lo!
Across my breast the abandoned hair doth flow,
Where one shorn tress long stirred the longing ache;
And next the heart that trembled for its sake
Lies the queen-heart in sovereign overthrow.
(1870)

### 8. LOVE'S LOVERS

Some ladies love the jewels in Love's zone,
And gold-tipped darts he hath for painless play
In idle scornful hours he flings away;
And some that listen to his lute's soft tone
Do love to vaunt the silver praise their own;
Some prize his blindfold sight; and there be they
Who kissed his wings which brought him yesterday
And thank his wings today that he is flown.
My lady only loves the heart of Love;
Therefore Love's heart, my lady, hath for thee
His bower of unimagined flower and tree.
There kneels he now, and all-anhungered of
Thine eyes gray-lit in shadowing hair above,
Seals with thy mouth his immortality. (1870)

### 9. PASSION AND WORSHIP

One flame-winged brought a white-winged harp-player
Even where my lady and I lay all alone;
Saying: "Behold, this minstrel is unknown;
Bid him depart, for I am minstrel here —
Only my strains are to Love's dear ones dear."
Then said I: "Through thine hautboy's rapturous tone
Unto my lady still this harp makes moan,
And still she deems the cadence deep and clear."
Then said my lady: "Thou art Passion of Love,
And this Love's Worship; both he plights to me.
Thy mastering music walks the sunlit sea;
But where wan water trembles in the grove
And the wan moon is all the light thereof,
This harp still makes my name its voluntary."
(1870)

### 10. THE PORTRAIT

O Lord of all compassionate control,
O Love! let this my lady's picture glow
Under my hand to praise her name, and show
Even of her inner self the perfect whole,
That he who seeks her beauty's furthest goal,
Beyond the light that the sweet glances throw
And refluent wave of the sweet smile, may know

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*Sonnet 5. Heart's Hope.* 4. **sea . . . dryshod.** The Israelites escaped from the Egyptians by passing through the Red Sea, which became dry ground by the power of the Lord (*Exodus*, 14).

*Sonnet 8. Love's Lovers.* 1. **zone,** girdle.
*Sonnet 9. Passion and Worship.* 6. **hautboy,** oboe, a wind instrument.

The very sky and sea-line of her soul.
Lo! it is done. Above the enthroning throat
The mouth's mold testifies of voice and kiss,
The shadowed eyes remember and foresee.
Her face is made her shrine. Let all men note
That in all years (O Love, thy gift is this!)
They that would look on her must come to me. (1870)

### 11. THE LOVE-LETTER

Warmed by her hand and shadowed by her hair
As close she leaned and poured her heart through thee,
Whereof the articulate throbs accompany
The smooth black stream that makes thy whiteness fair —
Sweet fluttering sheet, even of her breath aware —
Oh, let thy silent song disclose to me
That soul wherewith her lips and eyes agree
Like married music in Love's answering air.
Fain had I watched her when, at some fond thought,
Her bosom to the writing closelier pressed,
And her breast's secrets peered into her breast;
When, through eyes raised an instant, her soul sought
My soul, and from the sudden confluence caught
The words that made her love the loveliest. (1870)

### 13. YOUTH'S ANTIPHONY

"I love you, sweet; how can you ever learn
How much I love you?" "You I love even so,
And so I learn it." "Sweet, you cannot know
How fair you are." "If fair enough to earn
Your love, so much is all my love's concern."
"My love grows hourly, sweet." "Mine, too, doth grow,
Yet love seemed full so many hours ago!"
Thus lovers speak, till kisses claim their turn.
Ah! happy they to whom such words as these
In youth have served for speech the whole day long,
Hour after hour, remote from the world's throng,
Work, contest, fame, all life's confederate pleas —
What while Love breathed in sighs and silences
Through two blent souls one rapturous undersong. (1881)

### 15. THE BIRTH-BOND

Have you not noted, in some family
Where two were born of a first marriage-bed,
How still they own their gracious bond, though fed
And nursed on the forgotten breast and knee? —
How to their father's children they shall be
In act and thought of one goodwill; but each
Shall for the other have, in silence speech,
And in a word complete community?
Even so, when first I saw you, seemed it, love,
That among souls allied to mine was yet
One nearer kindred than life hinted of.
O born with me somewhere that men forget,
And though in years of sight and sound unmet,
Known for my soul's birth-partner well enough! *(1854;* 1870)

### 18. GENIUS IN BEAUTY

Beauty like hers is genius. Not the call
Of Homer's or of Dante's heart sublime —
Not Michael's hand furrowing the zones of time —
Is more with compassed mysteries musical;
Nay, not in Spring's or Summer's sweet footfall
More gathered gifts exuberant Life bequeathes
Than doth this sovereign face, whose love-spell breathes
Even from its shadowed contour on the wall.
As many men are poets in their youth,
But for one sweet-strung soul the wires prolong
Even through all change the indomitable song;
So in like wise the envenomed years, whose tooth
Rends shallower grace with ruin void of ruth,
Upon this beauty's power shall wreak no wrong. (1881)

### 19. SILENT NOON

Your hands lie open in the long, fresh grass —
The finger-points look through like rosy blooms;
Your eyes smile peace. The pasture gleams and glooms
'Neath billowing skies that scatter and amass.
All round our nest, far as the eye can pass,
Are golden kingcup-fields with silver edge
Where the cow-parsley skirts the hawthorn hedge.

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*Sonnet 15. The Birth-Bond.* 5. **father's children**, i.e., children by a second marriage.

*Sonnet 18. Genius in Beauty.* 3. **Michael**, Michelangelo (1475-1564), famous Italian painter, sculptor, architect, and poet. The reference is to his figures of Night, Day, Evening, etc.

'Tis visible silence, still as the hour-glass.
Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky —
So this winged hour is dropped to us from above.
Oh! clasp we to our hearts, for deathless dower,
This close-companioned inarticulate hour
When twofold silence was the song of love.
(1881)

### 21. LOVE-SWEETNESS

Sweet dimness of her loosened hair's downfall
About thy face; her sweet hands round thy head
In gracious fostering union garlanded;
Her tremulous smiles; her glances' sweet recall
Of love; her murmuring sighs memorial;
Her mouth's culled sweetness by thy kisses shed
On cheeks and neck and eyelids, and so led
Back to her mouth which answers there for all. —
What sweeter than these things, except the thing
In lacking which all these would lose their sweet —
The confident heart's still fervor; the swift beat
And soft subsidence of the spirit's wing,
Then when it feels in cloud-girt wayfaring,
The breath of kindred plumes against its feet?
(1870)

### 24. PRIDE OF YOUTH

Even as a child, of sorrow that we give
The dead, but little in his heart can find,
Since without need of thought to his clear mind
Their turn it is to die and his to live —
Even so the winged New Love smiles to receive
Along his eddying plumes the auroral wind,
Nor, forward glorying, casts one look behind
Where night-rack shrouds the Old Love fugitive.
There is a change in every hour's recall,
And the last cowslip in the fields we see
On the same day with the first corn-poppy.
Alas for hourly change! Alas for all
The loves that from his hand proud Youth lets fall,
Even as the beads of a told rosary!
(1881)

### 25. WINGED HOURS

Each hour until we meet is as a bird
That wings from far his gradual way along
The rustling covert of my soul — his song
Still loudlier trilled through leaves more deeply stirred.
But at the hour of meeting, a clear word
Is every note he sings, in Love's own tongue;
Yet, Love, thou know'st the sweet strain suffers wrong,
Through our contending kisses oft unheard.
What of that hour at last, when for her sake
No wing may fly to me nor song may flow;
When, wandering round my life unleaved, I know
The bloodied feathers scattered in the brake,
And think how she, far from me, with like eyes
Sees through the untuneful bough the wingless skies?
(1870)

### 27. HEART'S COMPASS

Sometimes thou seem'st not as thyself alone,
But as the meaning of all things that are;
A breathless wonder, shadowing forth afar
Some heavenly solstice hushed and halcyon;
Whose unstirred lips are music's visible tone;
Whose eyes the sun-gate of the soul unbar,
Being of its furthest fires oracular —
The evident heart of all life sown and mown.
Even such love is; and is not thy name Love?
Yea, by thy hand the Love-god rends apart
All gathering clouds of Night's ambiguous art;
Flings them far down, and sets thine eyes above;
And simply, as some gage of flower or glove,
Stakes with a smile the world against thy heart.
(1881)

### 31. HER GIFTS

High grace, the dower of queens; and therewithal
Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity;
A glance like water brimming with the sky
Or hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall;
Such thrilling pallor of cheek as doth enthrall
The heart; a mouth whose passionate forms imply
All music and all silence held thereby;
Deep golden locks, her sovereign coronal;
A round reared neck, meet column of Love's shrine
To cling to when the heart takes sanctuary;
Hands which forever at Love's bidding be,
And soft-stirred feet still answering to his sign —

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*Sonnet 27. Heart's Compass.* 4. **halcyon, calm.**

These are her gifts, as tongue may tell them o'er.
Breathe low her name, my soul; for that means more.
(1881)

### 34. THE DARK GLASS

Not I myself know all my love for thee;
How should I reach so far, who cannot weigh
Tomorrow's dower by gage of yesterday?
Shall birth and death, and all dark names that be
As doors and windows bared to some loud sea,
Lash deaf mine ears and blind my face with spray;
And shall my sense pierce love — the last relay
And ultimate outpost of eternity?
Lo! what am I to Love, the Lord of all?
One murmuring shell he gathers from the sand,
One little heart-flame sheltered in his hand.
Yet through thine eyes he grants me clearest call
And veriest touch of powers primordial
That any hour-girt life may understand.
(1881)

### 40. SEVERED SELVES

Two separate divided silences,
Which, brought together, would find loving voice;
Two glances, which together would rejoice
In love, now lost like stars beyond dark trees;
Two hands apart, whose touch alone gives ease;
Two bosoms, which, heart-shrined with mutual flame,
Would, meeting in one clasp, be made the same;
Two souls, the shores wave-mocked of sundering seas —
Such are we now. Ah! may our hope forecast
Indeed one hour again, when on this stream
Of darkened love once more the light shall gleam? —
An hour how slow to come, how quickly past —
Which blooms and fades, and only leaves at last,
Faint as shed flowers, the attenuated dream.
(1881)

### 48. DEATH-IN-LOVE

There came an image in Life's retinue
That had Love's wings and bore his gonfalon;
Fair was the web, and nobly wrought thereon,
O soul-sequestered face, thy form and hue!
Bewildering sounds, such as spring wakens to,
Shook in its folds; and through my heart its power
Sped trackless as the immemorable hour
When birth's dark portal groaned and all was new.
But a veiled woman followed, and she caught
The banner round its staff, to furl and cling —
Then plucked a feather from the bearer's wing,
And held it to his lips that stirred it not,
And said to me, "Behold, there is no breath;
I and this Love are one, and I am Death."
(1870)

### 49. WILLOWWOOD — 1

I sat with Love upon a woodside well,
Leaning across the water, I and he;
Nor ever did he speak nor looked at me,
But touched his lute wherein was audible
The certain secret thing he had to tell.
Only our mirrored eyes met silently
In the low wave; and that sound came to be
The passionate voice I knew; and my tears fell.
And at their fall, his eyes beneath grew hers;
And with his foot and with his wing-feathers
He swept the spring that watered my heart's drouth.
Then the dark ripples spread to waving hair,
And as I stooped, her own lips rising there
Bubbled with brimming kisses at my mouth.
(*1868;* 1869)

### 50. WILLOWWOOD — 2

And now Love sang; but his was such a song,
So meshed with half-remembrance hard to free,
As souls disused in death's sterility
May sing when the new birthday tarries long.
And I was made aware of a dumb throng
That stood aloof, one form by every tree,
All mournful forms, for each was I or she,
The shades of those our days that had no tongue.
They looked on us, and knew us and were known;
While fast together, alive from the abyss,
Clung the soul-wrung implacable close kiss;
And pity of self through all made broken moan

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*Sonnet 48. Death-in-Love.* 2. **gonfalon**, banner.

*Sonnets 49-52. Willowwood.* The title given to this series of four sonnets is poetical for *The Woodland of Weeping.* The willow is a symbol of mourning.

Which said, "For once, for once, for once alone!"
And still Love sang, and what he sang was this:
(*1868;* 1869)

### 51. WILLOWWOOD — 3

"O ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood,
That walk with hollow faces burning white:
What fathom-depth of soul-struck widowhood,
What long, what longer hours, one lifelong night,
Ere ye again, who so in vain have wooed
Your last hope lost, who so in vain invite
Your lips to that their unforgotten food,
Ere ye, ere ye again shall see the light!
Alas! the bitter banks in Willowwood,
With tear-spurge wan, with blood-wort burning red.
Alas! if ever such a pillow could
Steep deep the soul in sleep till she were dead —
Better all life forget her than this thing,
That Willowwood should hold her wandering!"
(*1868;* 1869)

### 52. WILLOWWOOD — 4

So sang he; and as meeting rose and rose
Together cling through the wind's well-away
Nor change at once, yet near the end of day
The leaves drop loosened where the heart-stain glows —
So when the song died did the kiss unclose;
And her face fell back drowned, and was as gray
As its gray eyes; and if it ever may
Meet mine again I know not if Love knows.
Only I know that I leaned low and drank
A long draft from the water where she sank,
Her breath and all her tears and all her soul;
And as I leaned, I know I felt Love's face
Pressed on my neck with moan of pity and grace,
Till both our heads were in his aureole.
(*1868;* 1869)

### 53. WITHOUT HER

What of her glass without her? The blank gray
There where the pool is blind of the moon's face.
Her dress without her? The tossed empty space
Of cloud-rack whence the moon has passed away.
Her paths without her? Day's appointed sway
Usurped by desolate night. Her pillowed place
Without her? Tears, ah me! for love's good grace,
And cold forgetfulness of night or day.
What of the heart without her? Nay, poor heart,
Of thee what word remains ere speech be still?
A wayfarer by barren ways and chill,
Steep ways and weary, without her thou art,
Where the long cloud, the long wood's counterpart,
Sheds doubled darkness up the laboring hill.
(1881)

### 55. STILLBORN LOVE

The hour which might have been yet might not be,
Which man's and woman's heart conceived and bore
Yet whereof life was barren — on what shore
Bides it the breaking of Time's weary sea?
Bondchild of all consummate joys set free,
It somewhere sighs and serves, and mute before
The house of Love, hears through the echoing door
His hours elect in choral consonancy.
But lo! what wedded souls now hand in hand
Together tread at last the immortal strand
With eyes where burning memory lights love home?
Lo! how the little outcast hour has turned
And leaped to them and in their faces yearned —
"I am your child; O parents, ye have come!'
(*1869;* 1870)

### 56. TRUE WOMAN—I. HERSELF

To be a sweetness more desired than spring;
A bodily beauty more acceptable
Than the wild rose-tree's arch that crowns the fell;
To be an essence more environing
Than wine's drained juice; a music ravishing
More than the passionate pulse of Philomel;
To be all this 'neath one soft bosom's swell
That is the flower of life — how strange a thing!
How strange a thing to be what Man can know

---

*Sonnet 56. True Woman, 1.* 3. **fell,** moor. 6. **Philomel,** the nightingale. (See Arnold's ***Philomela,*** page 470.)

But as a sacred secret! Heaven's own screen
Hides her soul's purest depth and loveliest glow;
Closely withheld, as all things most unseen —
The wave-bowered pearl — the heart-shaped seal of green
That flecks the snowdrop underneath the snow.

### 57. TRUE WOMAN—2. HER LOVE

She loves him; for her infinite soul is Love,
And he her lodestar. Passion in her is
A glass facing his fire, where the bright bliss
Is mirrored, and the heat returned. Yet move
That glass, a stranger's amorous flame to prove,
And it shall turn, by instant contraries,
Ice to the moon; while her pure fire to his
For whom it burns, clings close i' the heart's alcove.
Lo! they are one. With wifely breast to breast
And circling arms, she welcomes all command
Of love — her soul to answering ardors fanned;
Yet as morn springs or twilight sinks to rest,
Ah! who shall say she deems not loveliest
The hour of sisterly sweet hand-in-hand?
(1881)

### 58. TRUE WOMAN—3. HER HEAVEN

If to grow old in Heaven is to grow young
(As the Seer saw and said), then blest were he
With youth forevermore whose heaven should be
True Woman, she whom these weak notes have sung,
Here and hereafter — choir-strains of her tongue —
Sky-spaces of her eyes — sweet signs that flee
About her soul's immediate sanctuary —
Were Paradise all uttermost worlds among.
The sunrise blooms and withers on the hill
Like any hillflower; and the noblest troth
Dies here to dust. Yet shall Heaven's promise clothe
Even yet those lovers who have cherished still
This test for love — in every kiss sealed fast
To feel the first kiss and forbode the last.
(1881)

## From PART II. CHANGE AND FATE

### 60. TRANSFIGURED LIFE

As growth of form or momentary glance
In a child's features will recall to mind
The father's with the mother's face combined —
Sweet interchange that memories still enhance;
And yet, as childhood's years and youth's advance,
The gradual moldings leave one stamp behind,
Till in the blended likeness now we find
A separate man's or woman's countenance —
So in the Song, the singer's Joy and Pain,
Its very parents, evermore expand
To bid the passion's fullgrown birth remain,
By Art's transfiguring essence subtly spanned;
And from that song-cloud shaped as a man's hand
There comes the sound as of abundant rain.
(1881)

### 63. INCLUSIVENESS

The changing guests, each in a different mood,
Sit at the roadside table and arise;
And every life among them in likewise
Is a soul's board set daily with new food.
What man has bent o'er his son's sleep, to brood
How that face shall watch his when cold it lies? —
Or thought, as his own mother kissed his eyes,
Of what her kiss was when his father wooed?
May not this ancient room thou sit'st in dwell
In separate living souls for joy or pain?
Nay, all its corners may be painted plain
Where heaven shows pictures of some life spent well;
And may be stamped, a memory all in vain,
Upon the sight of lidless eyes in hell.
(*1860;* 1870)

### 65. KNOWN IN VAIN

As two whose love, first foolish, widening scope,
Knows suddenly, to music high and soft,
The Holy of holies; who because they scoffed
Are now amazed with shame, nor dare to cope
With the whole truth aloud, lest heaven should ope;
Yet, at their meetings, laugh not as they laughed
In speech; nor speak, at length; but sitting oft

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*Sonnet 57. True Woman, 2.* 7. **Ice to the moon,** ice in comparison with the cold moon.
*Sonnet 58. True Woman, 3.* 2. **Seer,** Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1722), a Swedish theologian and mystic.

Together, within hopeless sight of hope
For hours are silent — so it happeneth
When Work and Will awake too late, to gaze
After their life sailed by, and hold their breath.
Ah! who shall dare to search through what sad maze
Thenceforth their incommunicable ways
Follow the desultory feet of Death?

(*1853;* 1870)

### 66. THE HEART OF THE NIGHT

From child to youth; from youth to arduous man;
From lethargy to fever of the heart;
From faithful life to dream-dowered days apart;
From trust to doubt; from doubt to brink of ban —
Thus much of change in one swift cycle ran
Till now. Alas, the soul! — how soon must she
Accept her primal immortality —
The flesh resume its dust whence it began?
O Lord of work and peace! O Lord of life!
O Lord, the awful Lord of will! though late,
Even yet renew this soul with duteous breath:
That when the peace is garnered in from strife,
The work retrieved, the will regenerate,
This soul may see thy face, O Lord of death!

(1881)

### 69. AUTUMN IDLENESS

This sunlight shames November where he grieves
In dead red leaves, and will not let him shun
The day, though bough with bough be overrun.
But with a blessing every glade receives
High salutation; while from hillock-eaves
The deer gaze calling, dappled white and dun,
As if, being foresters of old, the sun
Had marked them with the shade of forest-leaves.
Here dawn today unveiled her magic glass;
Here noon now gives the thirst and takes the dew;
Till eve bring rest when other good things pass.
And here the lost hours the lost hours renew
While I still lead my shadow o'er the grass,
Nor know, for longing, that which I should do.

(1870)

### 70. THE HILL SUMMIT

This feast-day of the sun, his altar there
In the broad west has blazed for vesper-song;
And I have loitered in the vale too long
And gaze now a belated worshiper.
Yet may I not forget that I was 'ware,
So journeying, of his face at intervals
Transfigured where the fringed horizon falls —
A fiery bush with coruscating hair.
And now that I have climbed and won this height,
I must tread downward through the sloping shade
And travel the bewildered tracks till night.
Yet for this hour I still may here be stayed
And see the gold air and the silver fade
And the last bird fly into the last light.

(*1853;* 1870)

### 71. THE CHOICE — 1

Eat thou and drink; tomorrow thou shalt die.
Surely the earth, that's wise (being very old),
Needs not our help. Then loose me, love, and hold
Thy sultry hair up from my face, that I
May pour for thee this golden wine, brim-high,
Till round the glass thy fingers glow like gold.
We'll drown all hours; thy song, while hours are tolled,
Shall leap, as fountains veil the changing sky.
Now kiss, and think that there are really those,
My own high-bosomed beauty, who increase
Vain gold, vain lore, and yet might choose our way!
Through many years they toil; then on a day
They die not — for their life was death — but cease;
And round their narrow lips the mold falls close.

(*1848;* 1870)

### 72. THE CHOICE — 2

Watch thou and fear; tomorrow thou shalt die.
Or art thou sure thou shalt have time for death?

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*Sonnet 66. The Heart of the Night.* 4. **ban,** condemnation.

*Sonnets 71-73. The Choice.* Of the three sonnets under this title, William Rossetti, the poet's brother, says: "This trio is important as indicating Rossetti's youthful conception of life as a moral discipline and problem. He propounds three theories: 1, Eat thou and drink, tomorrow thou shalt die; 2, Watch thou and pray; 3, Think thou and act. It is manifest, however, that Rossetti intends us to set aside the 'Eat thou and drink' theory of life, and not to accept without much reservation the 'Watch thou and pray' theory. 'Think thou and act' is what he abides by."

*Sonnet 71. The Choice, 1.* 13. **They die not, etc.** Cf. Browning's *In a Gondola,* 229 ff., page 196. Rossetti states that he wrote the sonnet before he had read Browning's poem, but that he was annoyed by the resemblance.

Is not the day which God's word promiseth
To come man knows not when? In yonder sky,
Now while we speak, the sun speeds forth; can I
Or thou assure him of his goal? God's breath
Even at this moment haply quickeneth
The air to a flame; till spirits, always nigh
Though screened and hid, shall walk the daylight here.
And dost thou prate of all that man shall do?
Canst thou, who hast but plagues, presume to be
Glad in his gladness that comes after thee?
Will *his* strength slay *thy* worm in Hell? Go to;
Cover thy countenance, and watch, and fear.
(*1848;* 1870)

### 73. THE CHOICE — 3

Think thou and act; tomorrow thou shalt die.
Outstretched in the sun's warmth upon the shore,
Thou say'st: "Man's measured path is all gone o'er;
Up all his years, steeply, with strain and sigh,
Man clomb until he touched the truth; and I,
Even I, am he whom it was destined for."
How should this be? Art thou then so much more
Than they who sowed, that thou shouldst reap thereby?
Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the furthest flood-brim look with me;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drowned.
Miles and miles distant though the gray line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond —
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, there is more sea.
(*1848;* 1870)

### 77. SOUL'S BEAUTY

### (*Sibylla Palmifera*)

Under the arch of Life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee — which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.
This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still; — long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem — the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond flight, how many ways and days!
(*1866;* 1870)

### 78. BODY'S BEAUTY

### (*Lilith*)

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
(The witch he loved before the gift of Eve)
That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.
The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where
Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.
(*1864;* 1870)

### 81. MEMORIAL THRESHOLDS

What place so strange — though unrevealéd snow
With unimaginable fires arise
At the earth's end — what passion of surprise
Like frost-bound fire-girt scenes of long ago?
Lo! this is none but I this hour; and lo!
This is the very place which to mine eyes
Those mortal hours in vain immortalize,
'Mid hurrying crowds, with what alone I know.
City, of thine a single simple door,
By some new Power reduplicate, must be
Even yet my life-porch in eternity,

---

*Sonnet 77. Soul's Beauty.* This sonnet, originally called *Sibylla Palmifera*, was written for a painting of that name, the palm-bearing Sibyl, or prophetess. In the picture she bears a branch of palm and is seated on a throne beneath a stone canopy overlooking a temple court.

*Sonnet 78. Body's Beauty.* This sonnet was originally called *Lilith*, after the traditional first wife of Adam. (See Browning's *Adam, Lilith, and Eve*, page 352, and Rossetti's *Eden Bower*, page 522.) The sonnet was written for a painting entitled *Lady Lilith.* In both the painting and the sonnet, Lilith represents fleshly beauty and amorous passion.

Even with one presence filled, as once of yore;
Or mocking winds whirl round a chaff-strown floor
Thee and thy years and these my words and me.
(*1874;* 1881)

### 82. HOARDED JOY

I said: "Nay, pluck not — let the first fruit be;
Even as thou sayest, it is sweet and red,
But let it ripen still. The tree's bent head
Sees in the stream its own fecundity
And bides the day of fullness. Shall not we
At the sun's hour that day possess the shade,
And claim our fruit before its ripeness fade,
And eat it from the branch and praise the tree?"
I say: "Alas! our fruit hath wooed the sun
Too long — 'tis fallen and floats adown the stream.
Lo, the last clusters! Pluck them every one,
And let us sup with summer; ere the gleam
Of autumn set the year's pent sorrow free,
And the woods wail like echoes from the sea.
(1870)

### 83. BARREN SPRING

Once more the changed year's turning wheel returns;
And as a girl sails balanced in the wind,
And now before and now again behind
Stoops as it swoops, with cheek that laughs and burns —
So spring comes merry toward me here, but earns
No answering smile from me, whose life is twined
With the dead boughs that winter still must bind,
And whom today the spring no more concerns.
Behold, this crocus is a withering flame;
This snowdrop, snow; this apple-blossom's part
To breed the fruit that breeds the serpent's art.
Nay, for these spring-flowers, turn thy face from them,
Nor stay till on the year's last lily-stem
The white cup shrivels round the golden heart.
(1870)

### 86. LOST DAYS

The lost days of my life until today,
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay?
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of hell, athirst alway?
I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see,
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath.
"I am thyself — what hast thou done to me?"
"And I — and I — thyself" (lo! each one saith),
"And thou thyself to all eternity!"
(*1858;* 1869)

### 90. "RETRO ME, SATHANA!"

Get thee behind me. Even as, heavy-curled,
Stooping against the wind, a charioteer
Is snatched from out his chariot by the hair,
So shall Time be; and as the void car, hurled
Abroad by reinless steeds, even so the world.
Yea, even as chariot-dust upon the air,
It shall be sought and not found anywhere.
Get thee behind me, Satan. Oft unfurled,
Thy perilous wings can beat and break like lath
Much mightiness of men to win thee praise.
Leave these weak feet to tread in narrow ways.
Thou still, upon the broad vine-sheltered path,
Mayst wait the turning of the phials of wrath
For certain years, for certain months and days.
(*1847;* 1870)

### 94. MICHELANGELO'S KISS

Great Michelangelo, with age grown bleak
And uttermost labors, having once o'ersaid
All grievous memories on his long life shed,
This worst regret to one true heart could speak:
That when, with sorrowing love and reverence meek,
He stooped o'er sweet Colonna's dying bed,
His Muse and dominant Lady, spirit-wed —
Her hand he kissed, but not her brow or cheek.

---

*Sonnet 90. "Retro Me, Sathana!"* The title means *Get behind Me, Satan.* These are the words spoken by Christ to Satan at the time of the temptation, as told in *Luke,* 4:8.

*Sonnet 94. Michelangelo's Kiss.* Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) was a famous Italian painter, sculptor, architect, and poet.

4. **one true heart,** Ascanio Condivi, who published a biography of his master Michelangelo, in 1553. He is authority for the statement contained in lines 4-8 of the sonnet. 6. **Colonna,** Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547), an Italian poet, beloved friend of Michelangelo. She is referred to as one of the most beautiful characters of the Italian Renaissance.

O Buonarroti—good at Art's fire-wheels
To urge her chariot! — even thus the Soul,
Touching at length some sorely-chastened goal,
Earns oftenest but a little; her appeals
Were deep and mute — lowly her claim. Let be;
What holds for her Death's garner? And for thee?

(1881)

### 97. A SUPERSCRIPTION

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell;
Unto thine ear I hold the dead-sea shell
Cast up thy Life's foam-fretted feet between;
Unto thine eyes the glass where that is seen
Which had Life's form and Love's, but by my spell
Is now a shaken shadow intolerable,
Of ultimate things unuttered the frail screen.
Mark me, how still I am! But should there dart
One moment through thy soul the soft surprise
Of that winged Peace which lulls the breath of sighs —
Then shalt thou see me smile, and turn apart
Thy visage to mine ambush at thy heart
Sleepless with cold, commemorative eyes.

(*1869;* 1869)

### 99. NEWBORN DEATH—I

Today Death seems to me an infant child
Which her worn mother Life upon my knee
Has set to grow my friend and play with me;
If haply so my heart might be beguiled
To find no terrors in a face so mild —
If haply so my weary heart might be
Unto the newborn milky eyes of thee,
O Death, before resentment reconciled.
How long, O Death? And shall thy feet depart
Still a young child's with mine, or wilt thou stand
Fullgrown the helpful daughter of my heart,
What time with thee indeed I reach the strand
Of the pale wave which knows thee what thou art,
And drink it in the hollow of thy hand?

(*1868;* 1870)

### 100. NEWBORN DEATH—2

And thou, O Life, the lady of all bliss,
With whom, when our first heart beat full and fast,
I wandered till the haunts of men were passed,
And in fair places found all bowers amiss
Till only woods and waves might hear our kiss,
While to the winds all thought of Death we cast —
Ah, Life! and must I have from thee at last
No smile to greet me and no babe but this?
Lo! Love, the child once ours; and Song, whose hair
Blew like a flame and blossomed like a wreath;
And Art, whose eyes were worlds by God found fair;
These o'er the book of Nature mixed their breath
With neck-twined arms, as oft we watched them there:
And did these die that thou mightst bear me Death?

(*1868;* 1870)

### 101. THE ONE HOPE

When vain desire at last and vain regret
Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet —
Or may the soul at once in a green plain
Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?
Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scriptured petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown,
Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there —
Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

(*1869;* 1870)

## THREE SHADOWS

I looked and saw your eyes
In the shadow of your hair,
As a traveler sees the stream
In the shadow of the wood;
And I said, "My faint heart sighs,
Ah me! to linger there,
To drink deep and to dream
In that sweet solitude."

I looked and saw your heart
In the shadow of your eyes,

---

9. **good . . . fire-wheels.** Rossetti uses this phrase as a play on the name Buonarroti; but he follows a mistaken etymology. The name would have to be *Buoni ruoti* to mean *good wheels.*

As a seeker sees the gold
In the shadow of the stream;
And I said, "Ah me! what art
Should win the immortal prize,
Whose want must make life cold
And heaven a hollow dream?"

I looked and saw your love
In the shadow of your heart,
As a diver sees the pearl
In the shadow of the sea;
And I murmured, not above
My breath, but all apart —
"Ah! you can love, true girl,
And is your love for me?"

(*1876;* 1881)

## THE WHITE SHIP

HENRY I OF ENGLAND. — 25TH NOV., 1120

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)

King Henry held it as life's whole gain
That after his death his son should reign.

'Twas so in my youth I heard men say,
And my old age calls it back today.

King Henry of England's realm was he,
And Henry Duke of Normandy.

The times had changed when on either coast
"Clerkly Harry" was all his boast.

Of ruthless strokes full many an one
He had struck to crown himself and his son;
And his elder brother's eyes were gone.

And when to the chase his court would crowd,
The poor flung plowshares on his road,
And shrieked: "Our cry is from King to God!"

But all the chiefs of the English land
Had knelt and kissed the Prince's hand.

And next with his son he sailed to France
To claim the Norman allegiance;

And every baron in Normandy
Had taken the oath of fealty.

'Twas sworn and sealed, and the day had come
When the King and the Prince might journey home;

For Christmas cheer is to home hearts dear,
And Christmas now was drawing near.

Stout Fitz-Stephen came to the King —
A pilot famous in seafaring;

And he held to the King, in all men's sight,
A mark of gold for his tribute's right.

"Liege Lord! my father guided the ship
From whose boat your father's foot did slip
When he caught the English soil in his grip,

"And cried: 'By this clasp I claim command
O'er every rood of English land!'

"He was borne to the realm you rule o'er now
In that ship with the archer carved at her prow;

"And thither I'll bear, an' it be my due,
Your father's son and his grandson too.

"The famed White Ship is mine in the bay;
From Harfleur's harbor she sails today,

"With masts fair-pennoned as Norman spears
And with fifty well-tried mariners."

Quoth the King: "My ships are chosen each one,
But I'll not say nay to Stephen's son.

"My son and daughter and fellowship
Shall cross the water in the White Ship."

The King set sail with the eve's south wind,
And soon he left that coast behind.

The Prince and all his, a princely show,
Remained in the good White Ship to go.

With noble knights and with ladies fair,
With courtiers and sailors gathered there,
Three hundred living souls we were;

And I Berold was the meanest hind
In all that train to the Prince assigned.

---

*The White Ship.* This poem relates an actual incident. Henry I ruled in England from 1100 to 1135. He conquered Normandy in 1106.

2. **Rouen,** an important city in France, the ancient capital of Normandy. 14. **Clerkly,** learned, scholarly. Henry was called "Beauclerk" because of his scholarly tastes. 17. **elder . . . gone.** Henry seized the throne when his elder brother Robert, the rightful heir, was on a crusade to the Holy Land. When Henry conquered Normandy in 1106, he captured his brother and imprisoned him for the rest of his life.

45. **Harfleur,** a town in northern France.

The Prince was a lawless shameless youth;
From his father's loins he sprang without ruth.

Eighteen years till then he had seen,
And the devil's dues in him were eighteen.

And now he cried: "Bring wine from below;
Let the sailors revel ere yet they row.

"Our speed shall o'ertake my father's flight
Though we sail from the harbor at midnight."

The rowers made good cheer without check;
The lords and ladies obeyed his beck;
The night was light, and they danced on the deck.

But at midnight's stroke they cleared the bay,
And the White Ship furrowed the waterway.

The sails were set, and the oars kept tune
To the double flight of the ship and the moon.

Swifter and swifter the White Ship sped
Till she flew as the spirit flies from the dead;

As white as a lily glimmered she
Like a ship's fair ghost upon the sea.

And the Prince cried, "Friends, 'tis the hour to sing!
Is a songbird's course so swift on the wing?"

And under the winter stars' still throng,
From brown throats, white throats, merry and strong,
The knights and the ladies raised a song.

A song — nay, a shriek that rent the sky,
That leaped o'er the deep! — the grievous cry
Of three hundred living that now must die.

An instant shriek that sprang to the shock
As the ship's keel felt the sunken rock.

'Tis said that afar — a shrill strange sigh —
The King's ships heard it and knew not why.

Pale Fitz-Stephen stood by the helm
'Mid all those folk that the waves must whelm.

A great King's heir for the waves to whelm,
And the helpless pilot pale at the helm!

The ship was eager and sucked athirst,
By the stealthy stab of the sharp reef pierced;
And like the moil round a sinking cup,
The waters against her crowded up.

A moment the pilot's senses spin —
The next he snatched the Prince 'mid the din,
Cut the boat loose, and the youth leaped in.

A few friends leaped with him, standing near.
"Row! the sea's smooth and the night is clear!"

"What! none to be saved but these and I?"
"Row, row as you'd live! All here must die!"

Out of the churn of the choking ship,
Which the gulf grapples and the waves strip,
They struck with the strained oars' flash and dip.

'Twas then o'er the splitting bulwarks' brim
The Prince's sister screamed to him.

He gazed aloft, still rowing apace,
And through the whirled surf he knew her face.

To the toppling decks clave one and all
As a fly cleaves to a chamber-wall.

I Berold was clinging anear;
I prayed for myself and quaked with fear,
But I saw his eyes as he looked at her.

He knew her face and he heard her cry,
And he said, "Put back! she must not die!"

And back with the current's force they reel
Like a leaf that's drawn to a water-wheel.

'Neath the ship's travail they scarce might float,
But he rose and stood in the rocking boat.

Low the poor ship leaned on the tide;
O'er the naked keel as she best might slide,
The sister toiled to the brother's side.

He reached an oar to her from below,
And stiffened his arms to clutch her so.

But now from the ship some spied the boat,
And "Saved!" was the cry from many a throat.

And down to the boat they leaped and fell;
It turned as a bucket turns in a well,
And nothing was there but the surge and swell.

The Prince that was and the King to come,
There in an instant gone to his doom,

Despite of all England's bended knee
And maugre the Norman fealty!

He was a Prince of lust and pride;
He showed no grace till the hour he died.

When he should be King, he oft would vow,
He'd yoke the peasant to his own plow.
O'er him the ships score their furrows now.

God only knows where his soul did wake,
But I saw him die for his sister's sake.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)

And now the end came o'er the water's womb
Like the last great Day that's yet to come.

With prayers in vain and curses in vain,
The White Ship sundered on the mid-main;

And what were men and what was a ship
Were toys and splinters in the sea's grip.

I Berold was down in the sea;
And passing strange though the thing may be,
Of dreams then known I remember me.

Blithe is the shout on Harfleur's strand
When morning lights the sails to land;

And blithe is Honfleur's echoing gloam
When mothers call the children home;

And high do the bells of Rouen beat
When the Body of Christ goes down the street.

These things and the like were heard and shown
In a moment's trance 'neath the sea alone;

And when I rose, 'twas the sea did seem,
And not these things, to be all a dream.

The ship was gone and the crowd was gone,
And the deep shuddered and the moon shone;

And in a strait grasp my arms did span
The mainyard rent from the mast where it ran;
And on it with me was another man.

Where lands were none 'neath the dim sea-sky,
We told our names, that man and I.

"O I am Godefroy de l'Aigle hight,
And son I am to a belted knight."

"And I am Berold the butcher's son
Who slays the beasts in Rouen town."

Then cried we upon God's name, as we
Did drift on the bitter winter sea.

But lo! a third man rose o'er the wave,
And we said, "Thank God! us three may He save!"

He clutched to the yard with panting stare,
And we looked and knew Fitz-Stephen there.

He clung, and "What of the Prince?" quoth he.
"Lost, lost!" we cried. He cried, "Woe on me!"
And loosed his hold and sank through the sea.

And soul with soul again in that space
We two were together face to face;

And each knew each, as the moments sped,
Less for one living than for one dead;

And every still star overhead
Seemed an eye that knew we were but dead.

And the hours passed; till the noble's son
Sighed, "God be thy help! my strength's foredone!

"O farewell, friend, for I can no more!"
"Christ take thee!" I moaned; and his life was o'er.

Three hundred souls were all lost but one,
And I drifted over the sea alone.

At last the morning rose on the sea
Like an angel's wing that beat toward me.

Sore numbed I was in my sheepskin coat;
Half dead I hung, and might nothing note,
Till I woke sun-warmed in a fisher-boat.

The sun was high o'er the eastern brim
As I praised God and gave thanks to Him.

That day I told my tale to a priest,
Who charged me, till the shrift were released,
That I should keep it in mine own breast.

---

163. **Honfleur**, a town in northwestern France.

And with the priest I thence did fare
To King Henry's court at Winchester.

We spoke with the King's high chamberlain,
And he wept and mourned again and again,
As if his own son had been slain;

And round us ever there crowded fast
Great men with faces all aghast.

And who so bold that might tell the thing
Which now they knew to their lord the King?
Much woe I learnt in their communing.

The King had watched with a heart sore stirred
For two whole days, and this was the third;

And still to all his court would he say,
"What keeps my son so long away?"

And they said: "The ports lie far and wide
That skirt the swell of the English tide;

"And England's cliffs are not more white
Than her women are, and scarce so light
Her skies as their eyes are blue and bright;

"And in some port that he reached from France
The Prince has lingered for his pleasaunce."

But once the King asked: "What distant cry
Was that we heard 'twixt the sea and sky?"

And one said: "With suchlike shouts, pardie!
Do the fishers fling their nets at sea."

And one: "Who knows not the shrieking quest
When the sea-mew misses its young from the nest?"

'Twas thus till now they had soothed his dread,
Albeit they knew not what they said;

But who should speak today of the thing
That all knew there except the King?

Then pondering much they found a way,
And met round the King's high seat that day;

And the King sat with a heart sore stirred,
And seldom he spoke and seldom heard.

'Twas then through the hall the King was 'ware
Of a little boy with golden hair,

As bright as the golden poppy is
That the beach breeds for the surf to kiss;

Yet pale his cheek as the thorn in spring,
And his garb black like the raven's wing.

Nothing heard but his foot through the hall,
For now the lords were silent all.

And the King wondered, and said, "Alack!
Who send me a fair boy dressed in black?

"Why, sweet heart, do you pace through the hall
As though my court were a funeral?"

Then lowly knelt the child at the dais,
And looked up weeping in the King's face.

"O wherefore, O King, ye may say,
For white is the hue of death today.

"Your son and all his fellowship
Lie low in the sea with the White Ship."

King Henry fell as a man struck dead;
And speechless still he stared from his bed
When to him next day my rede I read.

There's many an hour must needs beguile
A King's high heart that he should smile —

Full many a lordly hour, full fain
Of his realm's rule and pride of his reign —

But this King never smiled again.

By none but me can the tale be told,
The butcher of Rouen, poor Berold.
(*Lands are swayed by a King on a throne.*)
'Twas a royal train put forth to sea,
Yet the tale can be told by none but me.
(*The sea hath no King but God alone.*)
(1880)

## ASTARTE SYRIACA
(*For a Picture*)

Mystery: lo! betwixt the sun and moon
Astarte of the Syrians; Venus Queen
Ere Aphrodite was. In silver sheen
Her twofold girdle clasps the infinite boon
Of bliss whereof the heaven and earth commune;
And from her neck's inclining flower-stem lean

---

214. **Winchester**, a city in Wessex, England, sixty miles southwest of London. It was the residence of the early English kings. 233. **pleasaunce**, pleasure. 236. **pardie**, a French oath—*par Dieu*, meaning *by God*.

268. **rede**, story, counsel.
*Astarte Syriaca.* Astarte is Ishtar, an Assyrian goddess known as queen of the gods. She was identified with the planet Venus. Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of love and beauty. Many of her attributes were derived from the Assyrian goddess.

Love-freighted lips and absolute eyes that wean
The pulse of hearts to the spheres' dominant tune.

Torch-bearing, her sweet ministers compel
All thrones of light beyond the sky and sea
The witnesses of Beauty's face to be;
That face, of Love's all-penetrative spell
Amulet, talisman, and oracle —
Betwixt the sun and moon a mystery.

## INSOMNIA

Thin are the night-skirts left behind
By daybreak hours that onward creep,
And thin, alas! the shred of sleep
That wavers with the spirit's wind;
But in half-dreams that shift and roll
And still remember and forget,
My soul this hour has drawn your soul
A little nearer yet.

Our lives, most dear, are never near,
Our thoughts are never far apart,
Though all that draws us heart to heart
Seems fainter now and now more clear.
Tonight Love claims his full control,
And with desire and with regret
My soul this hour has drawn your soul
A little nearer yet.

Is there a home where heavy earth
Melts to bright air that breathes no pain,
Where water leaves no thirst again
And springing fire is Love's new birth?
If faith long bound to one true goal
May there at length its hope beget,
My soul that hour shall draw your soul
Forever nearer yet. (1881)

## ALAS, SO LONG!

Ah! dear one, we were young so long,
It seemed that youth would never go,
For skies and trees were ever in song
And water in singing flow
In the days we never again shall know.
Alas, so long!
Ah! then was it all spring weather?
Nay, but we were young and together.

Ah! dear one, I've been old so long,
It seems that age is loath to part,
Though days and years have never a song,
And oh! have they still the art
That warmed the pulses of heart to heart?
Alas, so long!
Ah! then was it all spring weather?
Nay, but we were young and together.

Ah! dear one, you've been dead so long —
How long until we meet again,
Where hours may never lose their song
Nor flowers forget the rain
In glad noonlight that never shall wane?
Alas, so long!
Ah! shall it be then spring weather,
And ah! shall we be young together?

## FIVE ENGLISH POETS

### 1. THOMAS CHATTERTON

With Shakespeare's manhood at a boy's wild heart —
Through Hamlet's doubt to Shakespeare near allied,
And kin to Milton through his Satan's pride —
At Death's sole door he stooped, and craved a dart;
And to the dear new bower of England's art —
Even to that shrine Time else had deified,
The unuttered heart that soared against his side —
Drove the fell point, and smote life's seals apart.
Thy nested home-loves, noble Chatterton;
The angel-trodden stair thy soul could trace
Up Redcliffe's spire; and in the world's armed space
Thy gallant sword-play — these to many an one
Are sweet forever, as thy grave unknown
And love-dream of thine unrecorded face.
(1881)

### 2. WILLIAM BLAKE

This is the place. Even here the dauntless soul,
The unflinching hand, wrought on; till in that nook,

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8. **spheres' . . . tune.** The ancients believed that the stars made music as they revolved in their spheres.

*Five English Poets.* Rossetti was an enthusiastic admirer of the five poets enshrined in these sonnets.

*1. Thomas Chatterton.* Chatterton was born in 1752; he died, by suicide, in 1770. He was unable to find employment in London, and he was too proud to become the object of charity.

2. **Hamlet's doubt.** Hamlet doubted the propriety and the expediency of suicide. See his speech beginning "To be or not to be," *Hamlet*, III, 1, 56 ff. 9. **nested home-loves,** a reference to the deep love of Chatterton for Bristol, the city of his birth. 11. **Redcliffe's spire.** Chatterton spent much of his time in the attic of the church St. Mary Redcliffe, in Bristol. In his visions he saw angels going up and down the spire. 12. **gallant sword-play,** a reference to Chatterton's dreams of chivalrous encounter as expressed in *The Bristowe Tragedie* and other poems.

*2. William Blake.* Blake (1757-1827) was a mystic poet and artist. Rossetti addressed the poem to Frederick Shields, who had made a sketch of Blake's workroom and death-room at 3 Fountain Court, Strand, near the Thames River, London. Cf. Thomson's *William Blake*, page 575.

As on that very bed, his life partook
New birth, and passed. Yon river's dusky shoal,
Whereto the close-built coiling lanes unroll,
Faced his work-window, whence his eyes would stare,
Thought-wandering, unto naught that met them there,
But to the unfettered irreversible goal.
This cupboard, Holy of Holies, held the cloud
Of his soul writ and limned; this other one,
His true wife's charge, full oft to their abode
Yielded for daily bread the martyr's stone,
Ere yet their food might be that Bread alone,
The words now home-speech of the mouth of God.
(*1880;* 1881)

### 3. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

His Soul fared forth (as from the deep home grove
The father-songster plies the hour-long quest)
To feed his soul-brood hungering in the nest;
But his warm Heart, the mother-bird, above
Their callow fledgling progeny still hove
With tented roof of wings and fostering breast
Till the Soul fed the soul-brood. Richly blest
From Heaven their growth, whose food was Human Love.
Yet ah! Like desert pools that show the stars
Once in long leagues — even such the scarce-snatched hours
Which deepening pain left to his lordliest powers —
Heaven lost through spider-trammeled prison-bars.
Six years, from sixty saved! Yet kindling skies
Own them, a beacon to our centuries.
(*1880;* 1881)

### 4. JOHN KEATS

The weltering London ways where children weep
And girls whom none call maidens laugh — strange road
Miring his outward steps, who inly trode
The bright Castalian brink and Latmos' steep —
Even such his life's cross-paths; till deathly deep
He toiled through sands of Lethe; and long pain,
Weary with labor spurned and love found vain,
In dead Rome's sheltering shadow wrapped his sleep.
O pang-dowered Poet, whose reverberant lips
And heart-strung lyre awoke the Moon's eclipse —
Thou whom the daisies glory in growing o'er —
Their fragrance clings around thy name, not writ
But rumored in water, while the fame of it
Along Time's flood goes echoing evermore.
(*1880;* 1881)

### 5. PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

(INSCRIPTION FOR THE COUCH, STILL PRESERVED, ON WHICH HE PASSED THE LAST NIGHT OF HIS LIFE.)

'Twixt those twin worlds — the world of Sleep, which gave
No dream to warm, the tidal world of Death,
Which the earth's sea, as the earth, replenisheth —
Shelley, Song's orient sun, to breast the wave,
Rose from this couch that morn. Ah! did he brave
Only the sea? — or did man's deed of hell
Engulf his bark 'mid mists impenetrable? . . .
No eye discerned, nor any power might save.
When that mist cleared, O Shelley! what dread veil
Was rent for thee, to whom far-darkling Truth
Reigned sovereign guide through thy brief ageless youth?
Was the Truth *thy* Truth, Shelley? — Hush! All-Hail,
Past doubt, thou gav'st it; and in Truth's bright sphere
Art first of praisers, being most praiséd here.
(*1870;* 1881)

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10. **writ and limned,** written and painted or sketched. 11. **wife.** Mrs. Blake was regarded as an almost perfect wife. 12. **martyr's stone.** In the sermon on the mount, Christ asked his listeners, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" (*Matthew,* 7:9). Rossetti suggests that Blake was neglected and abused by his contemporaries.

*3. Samuel Taylor Coleridge.* 11. **deepening pain.** In order to relieve physical pain, Coleridge took opium. His later life was marked by fits of despondency induced by the habitual use of this drug. 12. **lost . . . prison-bars.** Coleridge sacrificed his poetic gift when he began to spin cobwebs of philosophy. Nearly all his great poems were written during the six years from 1797 to 1803.

*4. John Keats.* Rossetti uses classical names in this poem to suggest the classical element in Keats's poems. 4. **Castalian brink.** Castalia was a fountain on Mt. Parnassus, in Greece, sacred to Apollo, god of poetry and music, and the Muses; hence the source of inspiration. Latmos was a mountain in Asia Minor, the scene of the story of the love of Selene (the moon goddess) and Endymion (the shepherd boy) as told in Keats's *Endymion.* 6. **Lethe,** the river of forgetfulness. 8. **Rome's . . . shadow.** Keats died in Rome. His life was marked with sadness because of a hopeless love affair and ill health. 11. **daisies . . . o'er,** suggested by the famous remark of Keats when he was near death—"I feel the flowers growing over me." 12-13. **writ . . . in water,** a reference to "Here lies one whose name was writ in water," the epitaph that Keats wrote for himself in the melancholy days when he despaired of winning that fame for which he ardently longed.

*5. Percy Bysshe Shelley.* 4. **orient,** brilliant, lustrous. 6. **Only the sea.** Shelley lost his life by drowning.

## FOR "THE WINE OF CIRCE"

### (BY EDWARD BURNE-JONES)

Dusk-haired and gold-robed o'er the golden wine
She stoops, wherein, distilled of death and shame,
Sink the black drops; while, lit with fragrant flame,
Round her spread board the golden sunflowers shine.
Doth Helios here with Hecaté combine
(O Circe, thou their votaress!) to proclaim
For these thy guests all rapture in Love's name,
Till pitiless Night give Day the countersign?
Lords of their hour, they come. And by her knee
Those cowering beasts, their equals heretofore,
Wait; who with them in new equality
Tonight shall echo back the unchanging roar
Which sounds forever from the tide-strown shore
Where the disheveled seaweed hates the sea.

## "FOUND"

### (*For a Picture*)

"There is a budding morrow in midnight" —
So sang our Keats, our English nightingale.
And here, as lamps across the bridge turn pale
In London's smokeless resurrection-light,
Dark breaks to dawn. But o'er the deadly blight
Of love deflowered and sorrow of none avail
Which makes this man gasp and this woman quail,
Can day from darkness ever again take flight?
Ah! gave not these two hearts their mutual pledge,
Under one mantle sheltered 'neath the hedge
In gloaming courtship? And O God! today
He only knows he holds her — but what part
Can life now take? She cries in her locked heart,
"Leave me — I do not know you — go away!"
(*1881;* 1881)

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*For "The Wine of Circe."* This poem was written for a picture by Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98), an English painter noted for highly decorative design. He was a pupil of Rossetti. Circe was a sorceress who could turn men into beasts.

5. **Helios**, god of the sun, representing day. **Hecaté**, goddess of the night.

*"Found."* The picture for which this sonnet was written represents a lost girl found in the city streets by her former lover, a countryman bound to market with a white calf in his cart.

1. **"There . . . midnight,"** quoted from Keats's *To Homer*, line 11.

## THE KING'S TRAGEDY

### JAMES I OF SCOTS. — 20TH FEBRUARY, 1437

I Catherine am a Douglas born,
  A name to all Scots dear;
And Kate Barlass they've called me now
  Through many a waning year.

This old arm's withered now. 'Twas once
  Most deft 'mong maidens all
To rein the steed, to wing the shaft,
  To smite the palm-play ball.

In hall adown the close-linked dance
  It has shone most white and fair;
It has been the rest for a true lord's head,
And many a sweet babe's nursing-bed,
  And the bar to a King's chambère.

Aye, lasses, draw round Kate Barlass,
  And hark with bated breath
How good King James, King Robert's son,
  Was foully done to death.

Through all the days of his gallant youth
  The princely James was pent,
By his friends at first and then by his foes,
  In long imprisonment.

For the elder Prince, the kingdom's heir,
  By treason's murderous brood
Was slain; and the father quaked for the child
  With the royal mortal blood.

I' the Bass Rock fort, by his father's care,
  Was his childhood's life assured;
And Henry the subtle Bolingbroke,
Proud England's King, 'neath the southron yoke
  His youth for long years immured.

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*The King's Tragedy.* The events recorded in this ballad are historical, as are also the persons mentioned. Because of his violent suppression of the nobles, James was murdered on Feb. 20, 1437, by Sir Robert Graham (who had previously been banished) and his band at the instigation of Walter Stewart, earl of Atholl, whose hope of the throne had been destroyed by the birth of James's son.

"Tradition says that Catherine Douglas, in honor of her heroic act when she barred the door with her arm against the murderers of James the First of Scots, received popularly the name of 'Barlass.' The name remains to her descendants, the Barlas family, in Scotland, who bear for their crest a broken arm. . . . A few stanzas from King James's lovely poem, known as *The King's Quair* [*Quair* means *Book*], are quoted in the course of this ballad. The writer must express regret for the necessity which has compelled him to shorten the ten-syllabled lines to eight syllables, in order that they might harmonize with the ballad meter." (Rossetti's note.)

8. **palm-play ball.** See note on line 164, page 508. 16. **King Robert,** Robert III (1390-1424). 19. **James was pent.** Upon the death of his elder brother David, James was sent to France for safety, but the vessel was stopped by the English and James was taken into custody and kept as a prisoner in various places in England for nearly twenty years, until 1424. 26. **Bass Rock fort,** a small island at the entrance to the Firth of Forth, on the east coast of Scotland, where James embarked for France. 28. **Henry,** Henry IV, king of England (1399-1413). 29. **southron,** archaic for *southern*. See note on line 19. 30. **His,** James's.

Yet in all things meet for a kingly man
  Himself did he approve;
And the nightingale through his prison-wall
  Taught him both lore and love.

For once, when the bird's song drew him close
  To the opened window-pane,
In her bowers beneath a lady stood,
A light of life to his sorrowful mood,
  Like a lily amid the rain.

And for her sake, to the sweet bird's note,
  He framed a sweeter song,
More sweet than ever a poet's heart
  Gave yet to the English tongue.

She was a lady of royal blood;
  And when, past sorrow and teen,
He stood where still through his crownless years
  His Scottish realm had been,
At Scone were the happy lovers crowned,
  A heart-wed King and Queen.

But the bird may fall from the bough of youth,
  And song be turned to moan,
And Love's storm-cloud be the shadow of Hate,
When the tempest-waves of a troubled State
  Are beating against a throne.

Yet well they loved; and the god of Love,
  Whom well the King had sung,
Might find on the earth no truer hearts
  His lowliest swains among.

From the days when first she rode abroad
  With Scottish maids in her train,
I Catherine Douglas won the trust
  Of my mistress sweet Queen Jane.

And oft she sighed, "To be born a King!"
  And oft along the way
When she saw the homely lovers pass
  She has said, "Alack the day!"

Years waned — the loving and toiling years —
  Till England's wrong renewed
Drove James, by outrage cast on his crown,
  To the open field of feud.

'Twas when the King and his host were met
  At the leaguer of Roxbro' hold,
The Queen o' the sudden sought his camp
  With a tale of dread to be told.

And she showed him a secret letter writ
  That spoke of treasonous strife,
And how a band of his noblest lords
  Were sworn to take his life.

"And it may be here or it may be there,
  In the camp or the court," she said;
"But for my sake come to your people's arms
  And guard your royal head."

Quoth he, "'Tis the fifteenth day of the siege,
  And the castle's nigh to yield."
Oh, face your foes on your throne," she cried,
  "And show the power you wield;
And under your Scottish people's love
  You shall sit as under your shield."

At the fair Queen's side I stood that day
  When he bade them raise the siege,
And back to his Court he sped to know
  How the lords would meet their Liege.

But when he summoned his Parliament,
  The louring brows hung round,
Like clouds that circle the mountain-head
  Ere the first low thunders sound.

For he had tamed the nobles' lust
  And curbed their power and pride,
And reached out an arm to right the poor
  Through Scotland far and wide;
And many a lordly wrongdoer
  By the headsman's ax had died.

'Twas then upspoke Sir Robert Græme,
  The bold o'ermastering man,
"O King, in the name of your Three Estates
  I set you under their ban!

"For, as your lords made oath to you
  Of service and fealty,
Even in likewise you pledged your oath
  Their faithful sire to be;

"Yet all we here that are nobly sprung
  Have mourned dear kith and kin
Since first for the Scottish Barons' curse
  Did your bloody rule begin."

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37. **a lady,** Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset. She became the wife of James in 1424. 41. **sweeter song,** a reference to King James's *The King's Quair.* In the poem James tells the story of his love for Lady Joan Beaufort, including this episode of the nightingale. 45. **teen,** sorrow, grief. 48. **Scone,** a city in Perthshire, Scotland, the traditional place of Scottish coronations. James and Joan were crowned on May 21, 1424. 68 ff. **England's wrong renewed,** depredations by the English on the Scottish border. The English also attempted to capture James's daughter while she was on her way to France. These actions led James to attack Roxburgh Castle (on the River Tweed, near the English Border) in October, 1436, but he withdrew his forces after a fifteen-day siege.

72. **leaguer . . . hold,** the siege of Roxburgh Castle (in 1436). 105. **Three Estates,** the nobility, the clergy, and the common people.

With that he laid his hands on his King —
"Is this not so, my lords?"
But of all who had sworn to league with him
Not one spake back to his words.

Quoth the King: "Thou speak'st but for one Estate,
Nor doth it avow thy gage.
Let my liege lords hale this traitor hence!"
The Græme fired dark with rage,
"Who works for lesser men than himself,
He earns but a witless wage!"

But soon from the dungeon where he lay
He won by privy plots,
And forth he fled with a price on his head
To the country of the Wild Scots.

And word there came from Sir Robert Græme
To the King at Edinbro':
"No Liege of mine thou art; but I see
From this day forth alone in thee
God's creature, my mortal foe.

"Through thee are my wife and children lost,
My heritage and lands;
And when my God shall show me a way,
Thyself my mortal foe will I slay
With these my proper hands."

Against the coming of Christmastide
That year the King bade call
I' the Black Friars' Charterhouse of Perth
A solemn festival.

And we of his household rode with him
In a close-ranked company;
But not till the sun had sunk from his throne
Did we reach the Scottish Sea.

That eve was clenched for a boding storm,
'Neath a toilsome moon half seen;
The cloud stooped low and the surf rose high;
And where there was a line of the sky,
Wild wings loomed dark between.

And on a rock of the black beach-side
By the veiled moon dimly lit,
There was something seemed to heave with life
As the King drew nigh to it.

And was it only the tossing furze
Or brake of the waste sea-wold?
Or was it an eagle bent to the blast?
When near we came, we knew it at last
For a woman tattered and old.

But it seemed as though by a fire within
Her writhen limbs were wrung;
And as soon as the King was close to her,
She stood up gaunt and strong.

'Twas then the moon sailed clear of the rack
On high in her hollow dome;
And still as aloft with hoary crest
Each clamorous wave rang home,
Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed
Amid the champing foam.

And the woman held his eyes with her eyes:
"O King, thou art come at last;
But thy wraith has haunted the Scottish Sea
To my sight for four years past.

"Four years it is since first I met,
'Twixt the Duchray and the Dhu,
A shape whose feet clung close in a shroud,
And that shape for thine I knew.

"A year again, and on Inchkeith Isle
I saw thee pass in the breeze,
With the cerecloth risen above thy feet
And wound about thy knees.

"And yet a year, in the Links of Forth,
As a wanderer without rest,
Thou cam'st with both thine arms i' the shroud
That clung high up thy breast.

"And in this hour I find thee here,
And well mine eyes may note
That the winding-sheet hath passed thy breast
And risen around thy throat.

"And when I meet thee again, O King,
That of death hast such sore drouth —
Except thou turn again on this shore —
The winding-sheet shall have moved once more
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

"O King, whom poor men bless for their King,
Of thy fate be not so fain;
But these my words for God's message take,
And turn thy steed, O King, for her sake
Who rides beside thy rein!"

---

119. **one Estate,** the nobility. 120. **avow thy gage,** support thy challenge. 128. **country . . . Scots,** the Highlands, in northern Scotland. 138. **proper,** own. 141. **Perth,** a city in Perthshire, the seat of government at the time. The Charterhouse was the monastery of the Black Friars, an order of Dominican Friars, so called from their black mantles. 157. **sea-wold,** open land along the sea.

162. **writhen,** twisted. 165. **rack,** floating mass of clouds. 176. **Duchray . . . Dhu.** Duchray is a small stream west of Loch Lomond. Dhu is a lake in Aberdeenshire. Perthshire lies between Duchray and Dhu. 179. **Inchkeith Isle,** a small island in the Firth of Forth. 181. **cerecloth,** waxed cloth, used in burial. 183. **Links of Forth,** the windings of the River Forth, together with the adjacent land, near Stirling, Scotland. 192. **drouth,** thirst.

While the woman spoke, the King's horse reared
As if it would breast the sea,
And the Queen turned pale as she heard on the gale
The voice die dolorously.

When the woman ceased, the steed was still,
But the King gazed on her yet,
And in silence save for the wail of the sea
His eyes and her eyes met.

At last he said, "God's ways are His own;
Man is but shadow and dust.
Last night I prayed by His altar-stone;
Tonight I wend to the Feast of His Son;
And in Him I set my trust.

"I have held my people in sacred charge,
And have not feared the sting
Of proud men's hate — to His will resigned
Who has but one same death for a hind
And one same death for a King.

"And if God in His wisdom have brought close
The day when I must die,
That day by water or fire or air
My feet shall fall in the destined snare
Wherever my road may lie.

"What man can say but the Fiend hath set
Thy sorcery on my path,
My heart with the fear of death to fill,
And turn me against God's very will
To sink in His burning wrath?"

The woman stood as the train rode past,
And moved nor limb nor eye;
And when we were shipped, we saw her there
Still standing against the sky.

As the ship made way, the moon once more
Sank slow in her rising pall;
And I thought of the shrouded wraith of the King,
And I said, "The Heavens know all."

And now, ye lasses, must ye hear
How my name is Kate Barlass —
But a little thing, when all the tale
Is told of the weary mass
Of crime and woe which in Scotland's realm
God's will let come to pass.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth
That the King and all his Court
Were met, the Christmas Feast being done,
For solace and disport.

'Twas a wind-wild eve in February,
And against the casement-pane
The branches smote like summoning hands
And muttered the driving rain.

And when the wind swooped over the lift
And made the whole heaven frown,
It seemed a grip was laid on the walls
To tug the housetop down.

And the Queen was there, more stately fair
Than a lily in garden set;
And the King was loath to stir from her side,
For as on the day when she was his bride,
Even so he loved her yet.

And the Earl of Athole, the King's false friend,
Sat with him at the board;
And Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign Lord.

Yet the traitor Christopher Chaumber there
Would fain have told him all,
And vainly four times that night he strove
To reach the King through the hall.

But the wine is bright at the goblet's brim
Though the poison lurk beneath;
And the apples still are red on the tree
Within whose shade may the adder be
That shall turn thy life to death.

There was a knight of the King's fast friends
Whom he called the King of Love;
And to such bright cheer and courtesy
That name might best behove.

And the King and Queen both loved him well
For his gentle knightliness;
And with him the King, as that eve wore on,
Was playing at the chess.

And the King said (for he thought to jest
And soothe the Queen thereby),
"In a book 'tis writ that this same year
A King shall in Scotland die.

"And I have pondered the matter o'er,
And this have I found, Sir Hugh —
There are but two kings on Scottish ground,
And those kings are I and you.

"And I have a wife and a newborn heir,
And you are yourself alone;
So stand you stark at my side with me
To guard our double throne.

"For here sit I and my wife and child,
As well your heart shall approve,

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217. **hind**, peasant.

251. **lift**, sky, air.

In full surrender and soothfastness,
Beneath your Kingdom of Love."

And the Knight laughed, and the Queen too smiled;
But I knew her heavy thought,
And I strove to find in the good King's jest
What cheer might thence be wrought.

And I said, "My Liege, for the Queen's dear love
Now sing the song that of old
You made, when a captive Prince you lay,
And the nightingale sang sweet on the spray,
In Windsor's castle-hold."

Then he smiled the smile I knew so well
When he thought to please the Queen;
The smile which under all bitter frowns
Of hate that rose between,
Forever dwelt at the poet's heart
Like the bird of love unseen.

And he kissed her hand and took his harp,
And the music sweetly rang;
And when the song burst forth, it seemed
'Twas the nightingale that sang.

*"Worship, ye lovers, on this May;*
*Of bliss your kalends are begun.*
*Sing with us, Away, Winter, away!*
*Come, Summer, the sweet season and sun!*
*Awake for shame — your heaven is won —*
*And amorously your heads lift all;*
*Thank Love, that you to his grace doth call!"*

But when he bent to the Queen, and sang
The speech whose praise was hers,
It seemed his voice was the voice of the spring
And the voice of the bygone years.

*"The fairest and the freshest flower*
*That ever I saw before that hour,*
*The which o' the sudden made to start*
*The blood of my body to my heart.*

. . . . .

*Ah sweet, are ye a worldly creature*
*Or heavenly thing in form of nature?"*

And the song was long, and richly stored
With wonder and beauteous things;
And the harp was tuned to every change
Of minstrel ministerings;
But when he spoke of the Queen at the last,
Its strings were his own heart-strings.

*"Unworthy but only of her grace,*
*Upon Love's rock that's easy and sure,*
*In guerdon of all my lovë's space*
*She took me her humble creäture.*
*Thus fell my blissful aventure*
*In youth of love that from day to day*
*Flowereth aye new, and further I say.*

*"To reckon all the circumstance*
*As happed when lessen gan my sore,*
*Of my rancor and woeful chance,*
*It were too long — I have done therefor.*
*And of this flower I say no more*
*But unto my help her heart hath tended*
*And even from death her man defended."*

"Aye, even from death," to myself I said;
For I thought of the day when she
Had borne him the news, at Roxbro' siege,
Of the fell confederacy.

But Death even then took aim as he sang
With an arrow deadly bright;
And the grinning skull lurked grimly aloof,
And the wings were spread far over the roof
More dark than the winter night.

Yet truly along the amorous song
Of Love's high pomp and state,
There were words of Fortune's trackless doom
And the dreadful face of Fate.

And oft have I heard again in dreams
The voice of dire appeal
In which the King then sang of the pit
That is under Fortune's wheel.

*"And under the wheel beheld I there*
*An ugly Pit as deep as hell,*
*That to behold I quaked for fear.*
*And this I heard, that who therein fell*
*Came no more up, tidings to tell;*
*Whereat, astound of the fearful sight,*
*I wist not what to do for fright."*

And oft has my thought called up again
These words of the changeful song:
*"Wist thou thy pain and thy traváil*
*To come, well might'st thou weep and wail!"*
And our wail, O God! is long.

But the song's end was all of his love;
And well his heart was graced
With her smiling lips and her tear-bright eyes
As his arm went round her waist.

And on the swell of her long fair throat
Close clung the necklet-chain
As he bent her pearl-tired head aside,

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305. **Windsor.** During the period of his imprisonment, James was kept for a time in Windsor Castle. 316. **Worship, ye lovers,** etc. The lines printed in italics are adapted from King James's *The King's Quair* (see Critical Notes). 317. **kalends,** the first day of the ancient Roman month.

343. **aventure,** fortune, adventure. 388. **pearl-tired,** attired in pearls.

And in the warmth of his love and pride
He kissed her lips full fain.

And her true face was a rosy red,
The very red of the rose
That, couched on the happy garden-bed,
In the summer sunlight glows.

And all the wondrous things of love
That sang so sweet through the song
Were in the look that met in their eyes,
And the look was deep and long.

'Twas then a knock came at the outer gate,
And the usher sought the King.
"The woman you met by the Scottish Sea,
My Liege, would tell you a thing;
And she says that her present need for speech
Will bear no gainsaying."

And the King said: "The hour is late;
Tomorrow will serve, I ween."
Then he charged the usher strictly, and said:
"No word of this to the Queen."

But the usher came again to the King.
"Shall I call her back?" quoth he;
"For as she went on her way, she cried,
'Woe! Woe! then the thing must be!'"

And the King paused, but he did not speak.
Then he called for the Voidee-cup;
And as we heard the twelfth hour strike,
There by true lips and false lips alike
Was the draft of trust drained up.

So with reverence meet to King and Queen,
To bed went all from the board;
And the last to leave of the courtly train
Was Robert Stuart the chamberlain
Who had sold his sovereign lord.

And all the locks of the chamber door
Had the traitor riven and brast;
And that Fate might win sure way from afar
He had drawn out every bolt and bar
That made the entrance fast.

And now at midnight he stole his way
To the moat of the outer wall,
And laid strong hurdles closely across
Where the traitors' tread should fall.

But we that were the Queen's bower-maids
Alone were left behind;
And with heed we drew the curtains close
Against the winter wind.

And now that all was still through the hall,
More clearly we heard the rain
That clamored ever against the glass
And the boughs that beat on the pane.

But the fire was bright in the ingle-nook,
And through empty space around
The shadows cast on the arrased wall
'Mid the pictured kings stood sudden and tall
Like specters sprung from the ground.

And the bed was dight in a deep alcove;
And as he stood by the fire
The King was still in talk with the Queen
While he doffed his goodly attire.

And the song had brought the image back
Of many a bygone year;
And many a loving word they said
With hand in hand and head laid to head;
And none of us went anear.

But Love was weeping outside the house,
A child in the piteous rain;
And as he watched the arrow of Death,
He wailed for his own shafts close in the sheath
That never should fly again.

And now beneath the window arose
A wild voice suddenly;
And the King reared straight, but the Queen fell back
As for bitter dule to dree;
And all of us knew the woman's voice
Who spoke by the Scottish Sea.

"O King," she cried, "in an evil hour
They drove me from thy gate;
And yet my voice must rise to thine ears;
But alas! it comes too late!

"Last night at mid-watch, by Aberdour,
When the moon was dead in the skies,
O King, in a death-light of thine own
I saw thy shape arise.

"And in full season, as erst I said,
The doom had gained its growth;
And the shroud had risen above thy neck
And covered thine eyes and mouth.

"And no moon woke, but the pale dawn broke,
And still thy soul stood there;
And I thought its silence cried to my soul
As the first rays crowned its hair.

---

414. **Voidee-cup,** a spiced wine served late in the evening before bedtime. 424. **riven and brast,** torn and broken. 430. **hurdles,** narrow boards.

445. **dight,** prepared. 462. **dule to dree,** sorrow to suffer. 469. **Aberdour,** a town on the north shore of the Firth of Forth, across from Edinburgh.

"Since then have I journeyed fast and fain
In very despite of Fate,
Lest Hope might still be found in God's will;
But they drove me from thy gate.

"For every man on God's ground, O King,
His death grows up from his birth
In a shadow-plant perpetually;
And thine towers high, a black yew-tree,
O'er the Charterhouse of Perth!"

That room was built far out from the house;
And none but we in the room
Might hear the voice that rose beneath,
Nor the tread of the coming doom.

For now there came a torchlight-glare,
And a clang of arms there came;
And not a soul in that space but thought
Of the foe Sir Robert Græme.

Yea, from the country of the Wild Scots,
O'er mountain, valley, and glen,
He had brought with him in murderous league
Three hundred armèd men.

The King knew all in an instant's flash,
And like a King did he stand;
But there was no armor in all the room,
Nor weapon lay to his hand.

And all we women flew to the door
And thought to have made it fast;
But the bolts were gone and the bars were gone
And the locks were riven and brast.

And he caught the pale pale Queen in his arms
As the iron footsteps fell —
Then loosed her, standing alone, and said,
"Our bliss was our farewell!"

And 'twixt his lips he murmured a prayer,
And he crossed his brow and breast;
And proudly in royal hardihood
Even so with folded arms he stood —
The prize of the bloody quest.

Then on me leaped the Queen like a deer —
"O Catherine, help!" she cried.
And low at his feet we clasped his knees
Together side by side.
"Oh! even a king, for his people's sake,
From treasonous death must hide!"

"For *her* sake most!" I cried, and I marked
The pang that my words could wring.
And the iron tongs from the chimney-nook
I snatched and held to the King —
"Wrench up the plank! and the vault beneath
Shall yield safe harboring."

With brows low-bent, from my eager hand
The heavy heft did he take;
And the plank at his feet he wrenched and tore;
And as he frowned through the open floor,
Again I said, "For her sake!"

Then he cried to the Queen, "God's will be done!"
For her hands were clasped in prayer.
And down he sprang to the inner crypt;
And straight we closed the plank he had ripped
And toiled to smoothe it fair.

(Alas! in that vault a gap once was
Wherethrough the King might have fled;
But three days since close-walled had it been
By his will; for the ball would roll therein
When without at the palm he played.)

Then the Queen cried, "Catherine, keep the door,
And I to this will suffice!"
At her word I rose all dazed to my feet,
And my heart was fire and ice.

And louder ever the voices grew,
And the tramp of men in mail;
Until to my brain it seemed to be
As though I tossed on a ship at sea
In the teeth of a crashing gale.

Then back I flew to the rest; and hard
We strove with sinews knit
To force the table against the door;
But we might not compass it.

Then my wild gaze sped far down the hall
To the place of the hearthstone-sill;
And the Queen bent ever above the floor,
For the plank was rising still.

And now the rush was heard on the stair,
And "God, what help?" was our cry.
And was I frenzied or was I bold?
I looked at each empty stanchion-hold,
And no bar but my arm had I!

Like iron felt my arm, as through
The staple I made it pass —
Alack! it was flesh and bone — no more!
'Twas Catherine Douglas sprang to the door,
But I fell back Kate Barlass.

---

532. **heft,** handle. 545. **at the palm.** See note on line 164, page 508. 566. **stanchion-hold,** a large staple or socket for securing the bar that fastened the door.

With that they all thronged into the hall,
Half dim to my failing ken;
And the space that was but a void before
Was a crowd of wrathful men.

Behind the door I had fall'n and lay,
Yet my sense was wildly aware,
And for all the pain of my shattered arm
I never fainted there.

Even as I fell, my eyes were cast
Where the King leaped down to the pit;
And lo! the plank was smooth in its place,
And the Queen stood far from it.

And under the litters and through the bed
And within the presses all
The traitors sought for the King, and pierced
The arras around the wall.

And through the chamber they ramped and stormed
Like lions loose in the lair,
And scarce could trust to their very eyes —
For behold! no King was there.

Then one of them seized the Queen, and cried,
"Now tell us, where is thy lord?"
And he held the sharp point over her heart.
She drooped not her eyes nor did she start,
But she answered never a word.

Then the sword half pierced the true true breast;
But it was the Græme's own son
Cried, "This is a woman — we seek a man!"
And away from her girdle-zone
He struck the point of the murderous steel;
And that foul deed was not done.

And forth flowed all the throng like a sea,
And 'twas empty space once more;
And my eyes sought out the wounded Queen
As I lay behind the door.

And I said, "Dear Lady, leave me here,
For I cannot help you now;
But fly while you may, and none shall reck
Of my place here lying low."

And she said, "My Catherine, God help thee!"
Then she looked to the distant floor,
And clasping her hands, "O God help *him*,"
She sobbed, "for we can no more!"

But God He knows what help may mean,
If it mean to live or to die;
And what sore sorrow and mighty moan
On earth it may cost ere yet a throne
Be filled in His house on high.

And now the ladies fled with the Queen;
And through the open door
The night-wind wailed round the empty room
And the rushes shook on the floor.

And the bed drooped low in the dark recess
Whence the arras was rent away;
And the firelight still shone over the space
Where our hidden secret lay.

And the rain had ceased, and the moonbeams lit
The window high in the wall —
Bright beams that on the plank that I knew
Through the painted pane did fall
And gleamed with the splendor of Scotland's crown
And shield armorial.

But then a great wind swept up the skies,
And the climbing moon fell back;
And the royal blazon fled from the floor,
And naught remained on its track;
And high in the darkened window-pane
The shield and the crown were black.

And what I say next I partly saw
And partly I heard in sooth,
And partly since from the murderers' lips
The torture wrung the truth.

For now again came the armèd tread,
And fast through the hall it fell;
But the throng was less — and ere I saw,
By the voice without I could tell
That Robert Stuart had come with them
Who knew that chamber well.

And over the space the Græme strode dark
With his mantle round him flung;
And in his eye was a flaming light
But not a word on his tongue.

And Stuart held a torch to the floor,
And he found the thing he sought;
And they slashed the plank away with their swords;
And O God! I fainted not!

And the traitor held his torch in the gap,
All smoking and smoldering;
And through the vapor and fire, beneath
In the dark crypt's narrow ring,
With a shout that pealed to the room's high roof
They saw their naked King.

Half naked he stood, but stood as one
Who yet could do and dare;

---

664. **naked,** unarmed.

With the crown, the King was stript away —
The Knight was reft of his battle-array —
But still the Man was there.

From the rout then stepped a villain forth —
Sir John Hall was his name;
With a knife unsheathed he leapt to the vault
Beneath the torchlight-flame.

Of his person and stature was the King
A man right manly strong,
And mightily by the shoulder-blades
His foe to his feet he flung.

Then the traitor's brother, Sir Thomas Hall,
Sprang down to work his worst;
And the King caught the second man by the neck
And flung him above the first.

And he smote and trampled them under him;
And a long month thence they bare
All black their throats with the grip of his hands
When the hangman's hand came there.

And sore he strove to have had their knives,
But the sharp blades gashed his hands.
Oh, James! so armed, thou hadst battled there
Till help had come of thy bands;
And oh! once more thou hadst held our throne
And ruled thy Scottish lands!

But while the King o'er his foes still raged
With a heart that naught could tame,
Another man sprang down to the crypt;
And with his sword in his hand hard-gripped
There stood Sir Robert Græme.

(Now shame on the recreant traitor's heart
Who durst not face his King
Till the body unarmed was wearied out
With twofold combating!

Ah! well might the people sing and say,
As oft ye have heard aright —
*"O Robert Græme, O Robert Græme,*
*Who slew our King, God give thee shame!"*
For he slew him not as a knight.)

And the naked King turned round at bay,
But his strength had passed the goal,
And he could but gasp, "Mine hour is come;
But oh! to succor thine own soul's doom,
Let a priest now shrive my soul!"

And the traitor looked on the King's spent strength
And said, "Have I kept my word? —
Yea, King, the mortal pledge that I gave?
No black friar's shrift thy soul shall save,
But the shrift of this red sword!"

With that he smote his King through the breast;
And all they three in the pen
Fell on him and stabbed and stabbed him there
Like merciless murderous men.

Yet seemed it now that Sir Robert Græme,
Ere the King's last breath was o'er,
Turned sick at heart with the deadly sight
And would have done no more.

But a cry came from the troop above:
"If him thou do not slay,
The price of his life that thou dost spare
Thy forfeit life shall pay!"

O God! what more did I hear or see,
Or how should I tell the rest?
But there at length our King lay slain
With sixteen wounds in his breast.

O God! and now did a bell boom forth,
And the murderers turned and fled; —
Too late, too late, O God, did it sound! —
And I heard the true men mustering round,
And the cries and the coming tread.

But ere they came, to the black death-gap
Somewise did I creep and steal;
And lo! or ever I swooned away,
Through the dusk I saw where the white face lay
In the Pit of Fortune's Wheel.

And now, ye Scottish maids who have heard
Dread things of the days grown old —
Even at the last, of true Queen Jane
May somewhat yet be told,
And how she dealt for her dear lord's sake
Dire vengeance manifold.

'Twas in the Charterhouse of Perth,
In the fair-lit Death-chapelle,
That the slain King's corpse on bier was laid
With chaunt and requiem-knell.

And all with royal wealth of balm
Was the body purified;
And none could trace on the brow and lips
The death that he had died.

In his robes of state he lay asleep
With orb and scepter in hand;

---

751. **requiem-knell**, the bell sounded at requiem-mass for the dead. 757. **orb**, a small globe and cross mounted on the scepter, a part of the royal regalia.

And by the crown he wore on his throne
  Was his kingly forehead spanned.

And, girls, 'twas a sweet sad thing to see
  How the curling golden hair,
As in the day of the poet's youth,
  From the King's crown clustered there.

And if all had come to pass in the brain
  That throbbed beneath those curls,
Then Scots had said in the days to come
That this their soil was a different home
  And a different Scotland, girls!

And the Queen sat by him night and day,
  And oft she knelt in prayer,
All wan and pale in the widow's veil
  That shrouded her shining hair.

And I had got good help of my hurt.
  And only to me some sign
She made; and save the priests that were there
  No face would she see but mine.

And the month of March wore on apace;
  And now fresh couriers fared
Still from the country of the Wild Scots
  With news of the traitors snared.

And still as I told her day by day,
  Her pallor changed to sight,
And the frost grew to a furnace-flame
  That burnt her visage white.

And evermore as I brought her word,
  She bent to her dead King James,
And in the cold ear with fire-drawn breath
  She spoke the traitors' names.

But when the name of Sir Robert Græme
  Was the one she had to give,
I ran to hold her up from the floor;
For the froth was on her lips, and sore
  I feared that she could not live.

And the month of March wore nigh to its end,
  And still was the death-pall spread;
For she would not bury her slaughtered lord
  Till his slayers all were dead.

And now of their dooms dread tidings came,
  And of torments fierce and dire;
And naught she spake — she had ceased to speak —
  But her eyes were a soul on fire.

But when I told her the bitter end
  Of the stern and just award,
She leaned o'er the bier, and thrice three times
  She kissed the lips of her lord.

And then she said, "My King, they are dead!"
  And she knelt on the chapel-floor,
And whispered low with a strange proud smile —
  "James, James, they suffered more!"

Last she stood up to her queenly height,
  But she shook like an autumn leaf,
As though the fire wherein she burned
Then left her body, and all were turned
  To winter of life-long grief.

And "O James!" she said — "My James!" she said —
  "Alas for the woeful thing,
That a poet true and a friend of man,
In desperate days of bale and ban,
  Should needs be born a King!"

(*1881;* 1881)

## CHRISTINA ROSSETTI (1830-1894)

### SONG

When I am dead, my dearest,
  Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,
  Nor shady cypress tree.
Be the green grass above me
  With showers and dewdrops wet;
And if thou wilt, remember,
  And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
  I shall not feel the rain;
I shall not hear the nightingale
  Sing on as if in pain.
And dreaming through the twilight
  That doth not rise nor set,
Haply I may remember,
  And haply may forget. (*1848;* 1862)

### DREAM LAND

Where sunless rivers weep
Their waves into the deep,
She sleeps a charmèd sleep;
  Awake her not.
Led by a single star,
She came from very far
To seek where shadows are
  Her pleasant lot.

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,

---

818. **bale and ban,** evil and enmity.

*Song.* 4. **cypress tree.** The cypress is a symbol of mourning; it is a common tree in graveyards.

*Dream Land.* 10. **corn,** wheat.

For twilight cold and lorn
And water springs.
Through sleep, as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
That sadly sings.

Rest, rest, a perfect rest
Shed over brow and breast;
Her face is toward the west,
The purple land.
She cannot see the grain
Ripening on hill and plain,
She cannot feel the rain
Upon her hand.

Rest, rest, for evermore
Upon a mossy shore;
Rest, rest at the heart's core
Till time shall cease:
Sleep that no pain shall wake;
Night that no morn shall break,
Till joy shall overtake
Her perfect peace. (*1849;* 1850)

## AFTER DEATH

The curtains were half drawn; the floor was swept
And strewn with rushes; rosemary and may
Lay thick upon the bed on which I lay,
Where, through the lattice, ivy-shadows crept.
He leaned above me, thinking that I slept
And could not hear him; but I heard him say,
"Poor child, poor child"; and as he turned away
Came a deep silence, and I knew he wept.
He did not touch the shroud, or raise the fold
That hid my face, or take my hand in his,
Or ruffle the smooth pillows for my head.
He did not love me living; but once dead
He pitied me; and very sweet it is
To know he still is warm though I am cold.
(*1849;* 1862)

## REMEMBER

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned.
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve;
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.
(*1849;* 1862)

## THE THREE ENEMIES

### THE FLESH

"Sweet, thou art pale."
"More pale to see,
Christ hung upon the cruel tree
And bore His Father's wrath for me."

"Sweet, thou art sad."
"Beneath a rod
More heavy, Christ for my sake trod
The winepress of the wrath of God."

"Sweet, thou art weary."
"Not so Christ,
Whose mighty love of me sufficed
For Strength, Salvation, Eucharist."

"Sweet, thou art footsore."
"If I bleed,
His feet have bled; yea, in my need
His Heart once bled for mine indeed."

### THE WORLD

"Sweet, thou art young."
"So He was young
Who for my sake in silence hung
Upon the Cross with Passion wrung."

"Look, thou art fair."
"He was more fair
Than men, Who deigned for me to wear
A visage marred beyond compare."

"And thou hast riches."
"Daily bread;
All else is His — Who, living, dead,
For me lacked where to lay His Head."

"And life is sweet."
"It was not so
To Him, Whose Cup did overflow
With mine unutterable woe."

### THE DEVIL

"Thou drinkest deep."
"When Christ would sup
He drained the dregs from out my cup;
So how should I be lifted up?"

---

*After Death.* 2. **rosemary**, a fragrant shrub, the emblem of fidelity. **may**, hawthorn.

*The Three Enemies.* 6. **winepress . . . God.** See note on line 4 of *The Battle of Naseby*, page 1. 9. **Eucharist**, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

"Thou shalt win Glory."
"In the skies,
Lord Jesus, cover up mine eyes
Lest they should look on vanities."

"Thou shalt have Knowledge."
"Helpless dust!
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust;
Answer Thou for me, Wise and Just."

"And Might."—
"Get thee behind me. Lord,
Who hast redeemed and not abhorred
My soul, oh, keep it by Thy Word."
(*1851;* 1862)

## PARADISE

Once in a dream I saw the flowers
That bud and bloom in Paradise;
More fair they are than waking eyes
Have seen in all this world of ours.
And faint the perfume-bearing rose,
And faint the lily on its stem,
And faint the perfect violet,
Compared with them.

I heard the songs of Paradise:
Each bird sat singing in his place;
A tender song so full of grace
It soared like incense to the skies.
Each bird sat singing to his mate
Soft cooing notes among the trees;
The nightingale herself were cold
To such as these.

I saw the fourfold River flow,
And deep it was, with golden sand;
It flowed between a mossy land
With murmured music grave and low.
It hath refreshment for all thirst,
For fainting spirits strength and rest;
Earth holds not such a draft as this
From east to west.

The Tree of Life stood budding there,
Abundant with its twelvefold fruits;
Eternal sap sustains its roots,
Its shadowing branches fill the air.
Its leaves are healing for the world,
Its fruit the hungry world can feed,
Sweeter than honey to the taste
And balm indeed.

I saw the Gate called Beautiful,
And looked, but scarce could look within;
I saw the golden streets begin,
And outskirts of the glassy pool.
O harps, O crowns of plenteous stars,
O green palm branches many-leaved—
Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
Nor heart conceived.

I hope to see these things again,
But not as once in dreams by night;
To see them with my very sight,
And touch and handle and attain—
To have all heaven beneath my feet
For narrow way that once they trod;
To have my part with all the saints,
And with my God.
(*1854;* 1865)

## A BETTER RESURRECTION

I have no wit, no words, no tears;
My heart within me like a stone
Is numbed too much for hopes or fears.
Look right, look left, I dwell alone;
I lift mine eyes, but dimmed with grief
No everlasting hills I see.
My life is in the falling leaf;
O Jesus, quicken me.

My life is like a faded leaf,
My harvest dwindled to a husk;
Truly my life is void and brief
And tedious in the barren dusk;
My life is like a frozen thing,
No bud nor greenness can I see;
Yet rise it shall—the sap of Spring;
O Jesus, rise in me.

My life is like a broken bowl,
A broken bowl that cannot hold
One drop of water for my soul
Or cordial in the searching cold;
Cast in the fire the perished thing;
Melt and remold it, till it be
A royal cup for Him, my King;
O Jesus, drink of me.
(*1857;* 1862)

## A BIRTHDAY

My heart is like a singing bird
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
My heart is like an apple-tree

---

34. **Get . . . me.** See note on "*Retro Me, Sathana!*", page 536.
*Paradise.* This poem is based upon John's vision of the New Jerusalem in *Revelation,* 21-22.
17. **fourfold River,** the river of the water of life (*Revelation,* 22:1). Cf. *Genesis,* 2:10.—"And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads." 25ff. **Tree of life,** etc. From *Revelation,* 22:2.—"On either side of the river was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits. . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

35. **golden streets.** "The street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass" (*Revelation,* 21:21). 36. **glassy pool.** See note on line 6 of *The Convent Threshold,* page 557. 39-40. **Eye . . . conceived.** From *1 Corinthians,* 2:9.—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Whose boughs are bent with thickset fruit;
My heart is like a rainbow shell
That paddles in a halcyon sea;
My heart is gladder than all these
Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down;
Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
Work it in gold and silver grapes,
In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
Because the birthday of my life
Is come, my love is come to me.
(*1857;* 1861)

## AN APPLE GATHERING

I plucked pink blossoms from mine apple-tree
And wore them all that evening in my hair;
Then in due season when I went to see,
I found no apples there.

With dangling basket all along the grass
As I had come I went the self-same track;
My neighbors mocked me while they saw me pass
So empty-handed back.

Lilian and Lilias smiled in trudging by,
Their heaped-up basket teased me like a jeer;
Sweet-voiced they sang beneath the sunset sky —
Their mother's home was near.

Plump Gertrude passed me with her basket full,
A stronger hand than hers helped it along;
A voice talked with her through the shadows cool
More sweet to me than song.

Ah Willie, Willie, was my love less worth
Than apples with their green leaves piled above?
I counted rosiest apples on the earth
Of far less worth than love.

So once it was with me you stooped to talk,
Laughing and listening in this very lane;
To think that by this way we used to walk
We shall not walk again!

I let my neighbors pass me, ones and twos
And groups; the latest said the night grew chill,
And hastened. But I loitered; while the dews
Fell fast I loitered still.
(*1857;* 1862)

## ADVENT

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,
These Advent nights are long;
Our lamps have burned year after year,
And still their flame is strong.
"Watchman, what of the night?" we cry,
Heart-sick with hope deferred;
"No speaking signs are in the sky,"
Is still the watchman's word.

The Porter watches at the gate,
The servants watch within;
The watch is long betimes and late,
The prize is slow to win.
"Watchman, what of the night?" But still
His answer sounds the same:
"No daybreak tops the utmost hill,
Nor pale our lamps of flame."

One to another hear them speak
The patient virgins wise:
"Surely He is not far to seek" —
"All night we watch and rise."
"The days are evil looking back,
The coming days are dim;
Yet count we not His promise slack,
But watch and wait for Him."

One with another, soul with soul,
They kindle fire from fire:
"Friends watch us who have touched the goal."
"They urge us, come up higher."
"With them shall rest our waysore feet,
With them is built our home,
With Christ." — "They sweet, but He most sweet,
Sweeter than honeycomb."

There no more parting, no more pain,
The distant ones brought near,
The lost so long are found again,
Long lost but longer dear;
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
Nor heart conceived that rest,
With them our good things long deferred,
With Jesus Christ our Best.

We weep because the night is long,
We laugh for day shall rise,
We sing a slow contented song
And knock at Paradise.
Weeping we hold Him fast Who wept
For us, we hold Him fast;

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6. **halcyon**, calm. 10. **vair**, a fine fur, made from the skin of a gray squirrel, used for lining robes.

*Advent.* Advent is the period including the four Sundays preceding Christmas.

5. **Watchman . . . night.** Quoted from *Isaiah*, 21:11. 6. **Heart-sick . . . deferred.** From *Proverbs*, 13:12.— "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." 18 ff. **virgins**, etc. See the parable of the ten virgins, *Matthew*, 25:1-13. 32. **sweeter than honeycomb.** Quoted from *Psalms*, 19:10. 37-38. **Eye . . . rest.** See note on lines 39-40 of *Paradise*, page 555.

And will not let Him go except
He bless us first or last.

Weeping we hold Him fast tonight;
We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight
And summer smite the snow.
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
Shall coo the livelong day;
Then He shall say, "Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away."
(*1858;* 1862)

## AT HOME

When I was dead, my spirit turned
To seek the much-frequented house.
I passed the door, and saw my friends
Feasting beneath green orange-boughs;
From hand to hand they pushed the wine,
They sucked the pulp of plum and peach;
They sang, they jested, and they laughed,
For each was loved of each.

I listened to their honest chat.
Said one: "Tomorrow we shall be
Plod plod along the featureless sands,
And coasting miles and miles of sea."
Said one: "Before the turn of tide
We will achieve the eyrie-seat."
Said one: "Tomorrow shall be like
Today, but much more sweet."

"Tomorrow," said they, strong with hope,
And dwelt upon the pleasant way.
"Tomorrow," cried they one and all,
While no one spoke of yesterday.
Their life stood full at blessed noon;
I, only I, had passed away.
"Tomorrow and today," they cried;
I was of yesterday.

I shivered comfortless, but cast
No chill across the tablecloth;
I, all-forgotten, shivered, sad
To stay and yet to part how loath;
I passed from the familiar room,
I who from love had passed away,
Like the remembrance of a guest
That tarrieth but a day.
(*1858;* 1862)

## UPHILL

Does the road wind uphill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?
Those who have gone before.
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labor you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
Yea, beds for all who come.
(*1858;* 1861)

## THE CONVENT THRESHOLD

There's blood between us, love, my love,
There's father's blood, there's brother's blood,
And blood's a bar I cannot pass.
I choose the stairs that mount above,
Stair after golden sky-ward stair,
To city and to sea of glass.
My lily feet are soiled with mud,
With scarlet mud which tells a tale
Of hope that was, of guilt that was,
Of love that shall not yet avail;
Alas, my heart, if I could bare
My heart, this selfsame stain is there.
I seek the sea of glass and fire
To wash the spot, to burn the snare;
Lo, stairs are meant to lift us higher—
Mount with me, mount the kindled stair.

Your eyes look earthward, mine look up.
I see the far-off city grand,
Beyond the hills a watered land,
Beyond the gulf a gleaming strand
Of mansions where the righteous sup;
Who sleep at ease among their trees,
Or wake to sing a cadenced hymn
With Cherubim and Seraphim.
They bore the Cross, they drained the cup,
Racked, roasted, crushed, wrenched limb from limb,
They the offscouring of the world.
The heaven of starry heavens unfurled,
The sun before their face is dim.

You looking earthward, what see you?
Milk-white, wine-flushed among the vines,
Up and down leaping, to and fro,
Most glad, most full, made strong with wines,
Blooming as peaches pearled with dew,

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11-12. **knock . . . door.** From *Revelation,* 3:20.—"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."

*The Convent Threshold.* 6. **sea of glass.** In one of his visions John saw "a sea of glass mingled with fire" (*Revelation,* 15:2; 4:6). 24. **Cherubim and Seraphim,** two orders of angels. The first place in the hierarchy was given to the Seraphim, angels of love; the next place was given to the Cherubim, angels of light.

Their golden windy hair afloat,
Love-music warbling in their throat,
Young men and women come and go.

You linger, yet the time is short.
Flee for your life, gird up your strength
To flee; the shadows stretched at length
Show that day wanes, that night draws nigh;
Flee to the mountain, tarry not.
Is this a time for smile and sigh,
For songs among the secret trees
Where sudden blue birds nest and sport?
The time is short and yet you stay.
Today, while it is called today,
Kneel, wrestle, knock, do violence, pray;
Today is short, tomorrow nigh —
Why will you die? why will you die?

You sinned with me a pleasant sin;
Repent with me, for I repent.
Woe's me the lore I must unlearn!
Woe's me that easy way we went,
So rugged when I would return!
How long until my sleep begin,
How long shall stretch these nights and days?
Surely, clean angels cry, she prays;
She laves her soul with tedious tears;
How long must stretch these years and years?

I turn from you my cheeks and eyes,
My hair which you shall see no more —
Alas for joy that went before,
For joy that dies, for love that dies!
Only my lips still turn to you,
My livid lips that cry "Repent!"
O weary life, O weary Lent,
O weary time whose stars are few!
How should I rest in paradise,
Or sit on steps of heaven alone?
If saints and angels spoke of love,
Should I not answer from my throne,
"Have pity upon me, ye my friends,
For I have heard the sound thereof"?
Should I not turn with yearning eyes,
Turn earthwards with a pitiful pang?
Oh, save me from a pang in heaven!
By all the gifts we took and gave,
Repent, repent, and be forgiven.
This life is long, but yet it ends;
Repent and purge your soul and save —
No gladder song the morning stars
Upon their birthday morning sang
Than angels sing when one repents.

I tell you what I dreamed last night.
A spirit with transfigured face
Fire-footed clomb an infinite space.
I heard his hundred pinions clang,
Heaven-bells rejoicing rang and rang,
Heaven-air was thrilled with subtle scents,
Worlds spun upon their rushing cars.
He mounted, shrieking, "Give me light!"
Still light was poured on him, more light;
Angels, archangels he outstripped,
Exulting in exceeding might,
And trod the skirts of cherubim.
Still "Give me light," he shrieked; and dipped
His thirsty face, and drank a sea,
Athirst with thirst it could not slake.
I saw him, drunk with knowledge, take
From aching brows the aureole crown —
His locks writhe like a cloven snake —
He left his throne to grovel down
And lick the dust of seraphs' feet;
For what is knowledge duly weighed?
Knowledge is strong, but love is sweet;
Yea, all the progress he had made
Was but to learn that all is small
Save love, for love is all in all.

I tell you what I dreamed last night.
It was not dark, it was not light,
Cold dews had drenched my plenteous hair
Through clay; you came to seek me there,
And "Do you dream of me?" you said.
My heart was dust that used to leap
To you; I answered half asleep:
"My pillow is damp, my sheets are red,
There's a leaden tester to my bed;
Find you a warmer playfellow,
A warmer pillow for your head,
A kinder love to love than mine."
You wrung your hands, while I, like lead,
Crushed downwards through the sodden earth;
You smote your hands but not in mirth,
And reeled but were not drunk with wine.

For all night long I dreamed of you;
I woke and prayed against my will,
Then slept to dream of you again.
At length I rose and knelt and prayed.
I cannot write the words I said —
My words were slow, my tears were few;
But through the dark my silence spoke
Like thunder. When this morning broke,
My face was pinched, my hair was gray,
And frozen blood was on the sill
Where stifling in my struggle I lay.

If now you saw me you would say:
"Where is the face I used to love?"
And I would answer: "Gone before;
It tarries veiled in paradise.
When once the morning star shall rise,
When earth with shadow flees away

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82-83. **morning stars . . . sang.** From *Job*, 38:7.—"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." 84. **angels . . . repents.** From *Luke*, 15:7.—"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

118. **tester,** a canopy over a bed.

And we stand safe within the door,
Then you shall lift the veil thereof.
Look up, rise up, for far above
Our palms are grown, our place is set;
There we shall meet as once we met,
And love with old familiar love.”

(*1858;* 1862)

## GOBLIN MARKET

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry,
“Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpecked cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheeked peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pineapples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries —
All ripe together
In summer weather —
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try;
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,
Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy.”

Evening by evening
Among the brook-side rushes,
Laura bowed her head to hear,
Lizzie veiled her blushes;
Crouching close together
In the cooling weather,
With clasping arms and cautioning lips,
With tingling cheeks and finger tips.
“Lie close,” Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head.
“We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits;
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?”
“Come buy,” call the goblins
Hobbling down the glen.
“Oh,” cried Lizzie, “Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.”
Lizzie covered up her eyes,
Covered close lest they should look;
Laura reared her glossy head,
And whispered like the restless brook:
“Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
One hauls a basket,
One bears a plate,
One lugs a golden dish
Of many pounds’ weight.
How fair the vine must grow
Whose grapes are so luscious!
How warm the wind must blow
Through those fruit bushes!”
“No,” said Lizzie, “No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us.”
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran.
Curious Laura chose to linger,
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat’s face,
One whisked a tail,
One tramped at a rat’s pace,
One crawled like a snail,
One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry-skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together;
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather.

Laura stretched her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone.

Backward up the mossy glen
Turned and trooped the goblin men,
With their shrill repeated cry,
“Come buy, come buy.”
When they reached where Laura was
They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signaling each other,
Brother with sly brother.
One set his basket down,
One reared his plate;
One began to weave a crown
Of tendrils, leaves, and rough nuts brown

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*Goblin Market.* 22. **bullaces,** small European plums. 24. **bilberries,** whortleberries (similar to blueberries).

75. **wombat,** an animal of Australia that looks like a small bear. It carries its young in a pouch, like the kangaroo. 76. **ratel,** a South African animal, like the badger in size, form, and habits. 83. **beck,** a small brook.

(Men sell not such in any town);
One heaved the golden weight
Of dish and fruit to offer her;
“Come buy, come buy” was still their cry.
Laura stared but did not stir,
Longed but had no money.
The whisk-tailed merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purred,
The rat-paced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried, “Pretty Goblin” still for “Pretty Polly”;
One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
“Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin.
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather.”
“You have much gold upon your head,”
They answered all together;
“Buy from us with a golden curl.”
She clipped a precious golden lock,
She dropped a tear more rare than pearl,
Then sucked their fruit globes fair or red.
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flowed that juice;
She never tasted such before,
How should it cloy with length of use?
She sucked and sucked and sucked the more
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore;
She sucked until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away,
But gathered up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turned home alone.

Lizzie met her at the gate,
Full of wise upbraidings:
“Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many,
Ate their fruits and wore their flowers
Plucked from bowers
Where summer ripens at all hours?
But ever in the moonlight
She pined and pined away;
Sought them by night and day,
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew gray;
Then fell with the first snow,
While to this day no grass will grow
Where she lies low;
I planted daisies there a year ago
That never blow.
You should not loiter so.”
“Nay, hush,” said Laura;
“Nay, hush, my sister.
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still.
Tomorrow night I will
Buy more”; and kissed her.
“Have done with sorrow;
I’ll bring you plums tomorrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold,
What peaches with a velvet nap,
Pellucid grapes without one seed.
Odorous indeed must be the mead
Whereon they grow, and pure the wave they drink
With lilies at the brink,
And sugar-sweet their sap.”

Golden head by golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other’s wings,
They lay down in their curtained bed;
Like two blossoms on one stem,
Like two flakes of new-fall’n snow,
Like two wands of ivory
Tipped with gold for awful kings.
Moon and stars gazed in at them,
Wind sang to them lullaby,
Lumbering owls forebore to fly,
Not a bat flapped to and fro
Round their nest;
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crowed his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie;
Fetched in honey, milked the cows,
Aired and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churned butter, whipped up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sewed;
Talked as modest maidens should —
Lizzie with an open heart,

Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night.

At length slow evening came.
They went with pitchers to the reedy brook;
Lizzie most placid in her look,
Laura most like a leaping flame.
They drew the gurgling water from its deep.
Lizzie plucked purple and rich golden flags,
Then turning homeward said: "The sunset flushes
Those furthest loftiest crags;
Come, Laura, not another maiden lags.
No willful squirrel wags;
The beasts and birds are fast asleep."

But Laura loitered still among the rushes,
And said the bank was steep,
And said the hour was early still,
The dew not fall'n, the wind not chill;
Listening ever, but not catching
The customary cry,
"Come buy, come buy,"
With its iterated jingle
Of sugar-baited words;
Not for all her watching
Once discerning even one goblin
Racing, whisking, tumbling, hobbling —
Let alone the herds
That used to tramp along the glen,
In groups or single,
Of brisk fruit-merchant men.

Till Lizzie urged, "O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call, but I dare not look.
You should not loiter longer at this brook;
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark.
Let us get home before the night grows dark,
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do?"

Laura turned cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
"Come buy our fruits, come buy."
Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
Must she no more such succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life drooped from the root;
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
But peering through the dimness, naught discerning,
Trudged home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnashed her teeth for balked desire, and wept
As if her heart would break.

Day after day, night after night,
Laura kept watch in vain
In sullen silence of exceeding pain.
She never caught again the goblin cry,
"Come buy, come buy";
She never spied the goblin men
Hawking their fruits along the glen.
But when the noon waxed bright
Her hair grew thin and gray;
She dwindled, as the fair full moon doth turn
To swift decay and burn
Her fire away.

One day, remembering her kernel-stone,
She set it by a wall that faced the south;
Dewed it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watched for a waxing shoot,
But there came none.
It never saw the sun,
It never felt the trickling moisture run;
While with sunk eyes and faded mouth
She dreamed of melons, as a traveler sees
False waves in desert drouth
With shade of leaf-crowned trees,
And burns the thirstier in the sandful breeze.

She no more swept the house,
Tended the fowls or cows,
Fetched honey, kneaded cakes of wheat,
Brought water from the brook;
But sat down listless in the chimney-nook
And would not eat.

Tender Lizzie could not bear
To watch her sister's cankerous care,
Yet not to share.
She night and morning
Caught the goblins' cry:
"Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy."
Beside the brook, along the glen,
She heard the tramp of goblin men,
The voice and stir
Poor Laura could not hear;
Longed to buy fruit to comfort her,
But feared to pay too dear.
She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;

258. **succous,** juicy.

But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter time,
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp winter time.

Till Laura dwindling
Seemed knocking at Death's door.
Then Lizzie weighed no more
Better and worse;
But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kissed Laura, crossed the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook,
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look.

Laughed every goblin
When they spied her peeping;
Came toward her hobbling,
Flying, running, leaping,
Puffing and blowing,
Chuckling, clapping, crowing,
Clucking and gobbling,
Mopping and mowing,
Full of airs and graces,
Pulling wry faces,
Demure grimaces,
Cat-like and rat-like,
Ratel- and wombat-like,
Snail-paced in a hurry,
Parrot-voiced and whistler,
Helter-skelter, hurry-skurry,
Chattering like magpies,
Fluttering like pigeons,
Gliding like fishes —
Hugged her and kissed her,
Squeezed and caressed her,
Stretched up their dishes,
Panniers, and plates:
"Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them —
Pomegranates, figs."

"Good folk," said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie,
"Give me much and many";
Held out her apron,
Tossed them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honor and eat with us,"
They answered, grinning;
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry.
Such fruits as these
No man can carry;
Half their bloom would fly,
Half their dew would dry,
Half their flavor would pass by.
Sit down and feast with us,
Be welcome guest with us,
Cheer you and rest with us." —
"Thank you," said Lizzie, "but one waits
At home alone for me;
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I tossed you for a fee." —
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One called her proud,
Cross-grained, uncivil;
Their tones waxed loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails,
They trod and hustled her,
Elbowed and jostled her,
Clawed with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soiled her stocking,
Twitched her hair out by the roots,
Stamped upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeezed their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood —
Like a rock of blue-veined stone
Lashed by tides obstreperously —
Like a beacon left alone
In a hoary, roaring sea,
Sending up a golden fire —
Like a fruit-crowned orange-tree
White with blossoms honey-sweet
Sore beset by wasp and bee —
Like a royal virgin town
Topped with gilded dome and spire
Close beleaguered by a fleet
Mad to tug her standard down.

One may lead a horse to water;
Twenty cannot make him drink.
Though the goblins cuffed and caught her,
Coaxed and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratched her, pinched her black as ink,

Kicked and knocked her,
Mauled and mocked her,
Lizzie uttered not a word;
Would not open lip from lip
Lest they should cram a mouthful in;
But laughed in heart to feel the drip
Of juice that siruped all her face,
And lodged in dimples of her chin,
And streaked her neck which quaked like curd.
At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kicked their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writhed into the ground,
Some dived into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanished in the distance.

In a smart, ache, tingle,
Lizzie went her way;
Knew not was it night or day;
Sprang up the bank, tore through the furze,
Threaded copse and dingle,
And heard her penny jingle
Bouncing in her purse —
Its bounce was music to her ear.
She ran and ran
As if she feared some goblin man
Dogged her with gibe or curse
Or something worse;
But not one goblin skurried after,
Nor was she pricked by fear;
The kind heart made her windy-paced
That urged her home quite out of breath with haste
And inward laughter.

She cried, "Laura," up the garden,
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me;
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men."

Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutched her hair:
"Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing,
And ruined in my ruin,
Thirsty, cankered, goblin-ridden?" —
She clung about her sister,
Kissed and kissed and kissed her;
Tears once again
Refreshed her shrunken eyes,
Dropping like rain
After long sultry drouth;
Shaking with aguish fear, and pain,
She kissed and kissed her with a hungry mouth.

Her lips began to scorch,
That juice was wormwood to her tongue,
She loathed the feast.
Writhing as one possessed, she leaped and sung,
Rent all her robe, and wrung
Her hands in lamentable haste,
And beat her breast.
Her locks streamed like the torch
Borne by a racer at full speed,
Or like the mane of horses in their flight,
Or like an eagle when she stems the light
Straight toward the sun,
Or like a caged thing freed,
Or like a flying flag when armies run.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knocked at her heart,
Met the fire smoldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name —
Ah, fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense failed in the mortal strife;
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topped waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life?

Life out of death.
That night long Lizzie watched by her,
Counted her pulse's flagging stir,
Felt for her breath,
Held water to her lips, and cooled her face
With tears and fanning leaves.
But when the first birds chirped about their eaves,
And early reapers plodded to the place
Of golden sheaves,
And dew-wet grass
Bowed in the morning winds so brisk to pass,
And new buds with new day

Opened of cup-like lilies on the stream,
Laura awoke as from a dream,
Laughed in the innocent old way,
Hugged Lizzie but not twice or thrice;
Her gleaming locks showed not one thread of gray,
Her breath was sweet as May,
And light danced in her eyes.

Days, weeks, months, years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own;
Their mother-hearts beset with fears,
Their lives bound up in tender lives;
Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time;
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood
(Men sell not such in any town);
Would tell them how her sister stood
In deadly peril to do her good,
And win the fiery antidote;
Then joining hands to little hands
Would bid them cling together —
"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."
(*1859;* 1862)

## AMOR MUNDI

"Oh, where are you going with your love-locks flowing,
On the west wind blowing along this valley track?"
"The downhill path is easy, come with me an it please ye,
We shall escape the uphill by never turning back."

So they two went together in glowing August weather,
The honey-breathing heather lay to their left and right;
And dear she was to doat on, her swift feet seemed to float on
The air like soft twin pigeons too sportive to alight.

"Oh, what is that in heaven where gray cloud-flakes are seven,
Where blackest clouds hang riven just at the rainy skirt?"
"Oh, that's a meteor sent us, a message dumb, portentous,
An undeciphered solemn signal of help or hurt."

"Oh, what is that glides quickly where velvet flowers grow thickly,
Their scent comes rich and sickly?" "A scaled and hooded worm."
"Oh, what's that in the hollow, so pale I quake to follow?"
"Oh, that's a thin dead body which waits the eternal term."

"Turn again, O my sweetest — turn again, false and fleetest;
This beaten way thou beatest, I fear, is hell's own track."
"Nay, too steep for hill mounting; nay, too late for cost counting;
This downhill path is easy, but there's no turning back."
(*1865;* 1865)

## From THE PRINCE'S PROGRESS
### Too Late for Love

Too late for love, too late for joy,
Too late, too late!
You loitered on the road too long,
You trifled at the gate.
The enchanted dove upon her branch
Died without a mate;
The enchanted princess in her tower
Slept, died, behind the grate;
Her heart was starving all this while
You made it wait.

Ten years ago, five years ago,
One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
Though somewhat slow;
Then you had known her living face
Which now you cannot know.
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
To melt the snow.

Is she fair now as she lies?
Once she was fair;

---

*Amor Mundi.* The title means *Love of the World.*
3. **an,** if.

16. **the . . . term,** the day of judgment.
*The Prince's Progress.* In the complete poem the Prince, a handsome, lazy fellow, sets out late on his pilgrimage; but he loiters on the way, is decoyed by bad company and idle hopes, and when he reaches his destined bride, he finds her dead. The song given here was the nucleus of the poem. It was originally entitled *The Prince Who Arrived Too Late.* Miss Rossetti expanded the dirge into a long narrative poem at the suggestion of her brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Cf. Browning's *In A Balcony,* page 245.

Meet queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.
Now these are poppies in her locks,
White poppies she must wear;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
And the want graven there;
Or is the hunger fed at length,
Cast off the care?

We never saw her with a smile
Or with a frown;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
Though tossed of down;
She little heeded what she wore,
Kirtle, or wreath, or gown;
We think her white brows often ached
Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks
That used to be so brown.

We never heard her speak in haste;
Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
As it was meet;
Her heart sat silent through the noise
And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
No hurry in her feet;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
That she might run to greet.

You should have wept her yesterday,
Wasting upon her bed;
But wherefore should you weep today
That she is dead?
Lo we who love weep not today,
But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
Your roses are too red;
Let be these poppies, not for you
Cut down and spread. (*1861;* 1866)

## "TODAY FOR ME"

She sitteth still who used to dance,
She weepeth sore and more and more —
Let us sit with thee weeping sore,
O fair France.

She trembleth as the days advance
Who used to be so light of heart —
We in thy trembling bear a part,
Sister France.

Her eyes shine tearful as they glance;
"Who shall give back my slaughtered sons?
"Bind up," she saith, "my wounded ones." —
Alas, France!

She struggles in a deathly trance,
As in a dream her pulses stir,
She hears the nations calling her,
"France, France, France!"

Thou people of the lifted lance,
Forbear her tears, forbear her blood;
Roll back, roll back, thy whelming flood,
Back from France.

Eye not her loveliness askance,
Forge not for her a galling chain;
Leave her at peace to bloom again,
Vine-clad France.

A time there is for change and chance,
A time for passing of the cup;
And One abides can yet bind up
Broken France.

A time there is for change and chance;
Who next shall drink the trembling cup,
Wring out its dregs and suck them up
After France? (1871)

## From *SING-SONG*

"If I were a queen,
What would I do?
I'd make you king,
And I'd wait on you."

"If I were a king,
What would I do?
I'd make you queen,
For I'd marry you."

---

Mother shake the cherry-tree,
Susan catch a cherry;
Oh, how funny that will be —
Let's be merry!

One for brother, one for sister,
Two for mother more,
Six for father, hot and tired,
Knocking at the door.

---

The wind has such a rainy sound
Moaning through the town,
The sea has such a windy sound —
Will the ships go down?

---

*"Today For Me."* Dante Gabriel Rossetti regarded this poem as the greatest of all his sister's poems. It was written during the agonized suspense of the German-French campaign of 1870-71.

17. **people . . . lance,** people of Germany.

*Sing-Song.* This is a happy title given by Miss Rossetti to a collection of lyrics, some of which are suggestive of Mother Goose. Cf. Stevenson's poems beginning on page 802.

The apples in the orchard
Tumble from their tree. —
Oh, will the ships go down, go down,
In the windy sea?

---

Fly away, fly away over the sea,
Sun-loving swallow, for summer is done;
Come again, come again, come back to me,
Bringing the summer and bringing the sun.

---

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you;
But when the leaves hang trembling
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I;
But when the trees bow down their heads
The wind is passing by.

---

Boats sail on the rivers,
And ships sail on the seas;
But clouds that sail across the sky
Are prettier far than these.

There are bridges on the rivers,
As pretty as you please;
But the bow that bridges heaven,
And overtops the trees,
And builds a road from earth to sky,
Is prettier far than these.
(1872)

## From MONNA INNOMINATA

### II

Vien dietro a me e lascia dir le genti.
— Dante.
Contando i casi della vita nostra.
— Petrarca.

Many in aftertimes will say of you
"He loved her" — while of me what will they say?
Not that I loved you more than just in play,
For fashion's sake as idle women do.
Even let them prate; who know not what we knew
Of love and parting in exceeding pain,
Of parting hopeless here to meet again,
Hopeless on earth, and heaven is out of view.
But by my heart of love laid bare to you,
My love that you can make not void nor vain,
Love that foregoes you but to claim anew
Beyond this passage of the gate of death,
I charge you at the Judgment make it plain
My love of you was life and not a breath.
(*Before 1882*)

## DE PROFUNDIS

Oh, why is heaven built so far,
Oh, why is earth set so remote?
I cannot reach the nearest star
That hangs afloat.

I would not care to reach the moon,
One round monotonous of change;
Yet even she repeats her tune
Beyond my range.

I never watch the scattered fire
Of stars, or sun's far-trailing train,
But all my heart is one desire,
And all in vain.

For I am bound with fleshly bands,
Joy, beauty, lie beyond my scope;
I strain my heart, I stretch my hands,
And catch at hope. (*Before 1882*)

## THE HILLS ARE TIPPED WITH SUNSHINE

The hills are tipped with sunshine, while I walk
In shadows dim and cold;
The unawakened rose sleeps on her stalk
In a bud's fold,
Until the sun flood all the world with gold.

The hills are crowned with glory, and the glow
Flows widening down apace;
Unto the sunny hilltops I, set low,
Lift a tired face —
Ah, happy rose, content to wait for grace!

How tired a face, how tired a brain, how tired
A heart I lift, who long

---

*Monna Innominata.* The title means *My Nameless Lady.* The poem consists of fourteen sonnets, supposed, from Miss Rossetti's introductory note, to be spoken by one of the numerous unnamed ladies exalted by poets before Dante and Petrarch. "One can imagine," she says, "many a lady as sharing her lover's poetic aptitude, while the barrier between them might be one held sacred by both, yet not such as to render mutual love incompatible with mutual honor." W. M. Rossetti states that the real speaker in the sonnets is "Christina herself giving expression to her love for Charles Cayley," a scholarly recluse whom she declined to marry because of his liberal religious views.

The quotation from Dante may be translated, "Come after me and let the people talk" (*Purgatory*, 5, 13). The quotation from Petrarch is translated, "Pointing the dangers of this life below" (*Sonnet*, 244, 12).

*De Profundis.* The title means *From the Depths.*

For something never felt but still desired;
Sunshine and song,
Song where the choirs of sunny heaven stand choired.
(*Before 1893*)

### SLEEPING AT LAST

Sleeping at last, the trouble and tumult over,
Sleeping at last, the struggle and horror past,
Cold and white, out of sight of friend and of lover,
Sleeping at last.

No more a tired heart downcast or overcast,
No more pangs that wring or shifting fears that hover,
Sleeping at last in a dreamless sleep locked fast.

Fast asleep. Singing birds in their leafy cover
Cannot wake her, nor shake her the gusty blast.
Under the purple thyme and the purple clover
Sleeping at last.
(*1893;* 1896)

## COVENTRY PATMORE (1823-1896)

### From *THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE*

### The Impossibility

Lo, Love's obeyed by all. 'Tis right
That all should know what they obey,
Lest erring conscience damp delight,
And folly laugh our joys away.
Thou Primal Love, who grantest wings
And voices to the woodland birds,
Grant me the power of saying things
Too simple and too sweet for words! (1854)

### Love's Reality

I walk, I trust, with open eyes;
I've traveled half my worldly course;
And in the way behind me lies
Much vanity and some remorse;
I've lived to feel how pride may part
Spirits, though matched like hand and glove;
I've blushed for love's abode, the heart;
But have not disbelieved in love;
Nor unto love, sole mortal thing
Of worth immortal, done the wrong
To count it, with the rest that sing,
Unworthy of a serious song;
And love is my reward, for now,
When most of dead'ning time complain,
The myrtle blooms upon my brow,
Its odor quickens all my brain. (1854)

### Love at Large

Whene'er I come where ladies are,
How sad soever I was before,
Though like a ship frost-bound and far
Withheld in ice from the ocean's roar,
Third-wintered in that dreadful dock,
With stiffened cordage, sails decayed,
And crew that care for calm and shock
Alike, too dull to be dismayed,
Yet, if I come where ladies are,
How sad soever I was before,
Then is my sadness banished far,
And I am like that ship no more;
Or like that ship if the ice-field splits,
Burst by the sudden polar spring,
And all thank God with their warming wits,
And kiss each other and dance and sing,
And hoist fresh sails, that make the breeze
Blow them along the liquid sea,
Out of the North, where life did freeze,
Into the haven where they would be.
(1854)

### The Lover

He meets, by heavenly chance express,
The destined maid; some hidden hand
Unveils to him that loveliness
Which others cannot understand.
His merits in her presence grow,
To match the promise in her eyes,
And round her happy footsteps blow
The authentic airs of paradise.
For joy of her he cannot sleep;
Her beauty haunts him all the night;
It melts his heart, it makes him weep
For wonder, worship, and delight.
Oh, paradox of love, he longs,
Most humble when he most aspires,
To suffer scorn and cruel wrongs
From her he honors and desires.
Her graces make him rich, and ask
No guerdon; this imperial style
Affronts him; he disdains to bask,
The pensioner of her priceless smile.

---

*Sleeping at Last.* W. M. Rossetti regarded this poem as the last one written by his sister. He found it after her death.

*The Angel in the House.* In the Prologue to this poem, Patmore introduces Vaughan, a poet who seeks fame largely to please his wife. He therefore decides to write a poem with his wife Honoria and love as the theme; *The Angel in the House* is the result. The poem is made up of a number of brief episodes, each prefaced by several short preludes. The selections given here are all preludes except "The Wedding Sermon," which is a section of *The Wedding*, one of the narratives. Honoria, the "Angel of the House," is the daughter of the Dean of Salisbury Cathedral.

*Love's Reality.* 15. myrtle . . . brow. In ancient times poets were often crowned with myrtle.

He prays for some hard thing to do,
Some work of fame and labor immense,
To stretch the languid bulk and thew
Of love's fresh-born magnipotence.
No smallest boon were bought too dear,
Though bartered for his love-sick life;
Yet trusts he, with undoubted cheer,
To vanquish heaven, and call her wife.
He notes how queens of sweetness still
Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate;
How, self-consigned with lavish will,
They ask but love proportionate;
How swift pursuit by small degrees,
Love's tactic, works like miracle;
How valor, clothed in courtesies,
Brings down the haughtiest citadel;
And therefore, though he merits not
To kiss the braid upon her skirt,
His hope, discouraged ne'er a jot,
Out-soars all possible desert. (1854)

### The Wedding Sermon

"Now, while she's changing," said the Dean,
"Her bridal for her traveling dress,
I'll preach allegiance to your queen!
Preaching's the thing which I profess;
And one more minute's mine! You know
I've paid my girl a father's debt,
And this last charge is all I owe.
She's yours; but I love more than yet
You can; such fondness only wakes
When time has raised the heart above
The prejudice of youth, which makes
Beauty conditional to love.
Prepare to meet the weak alarms
Of novel nearness; recollect
The eye which magnifies her charms
Is microscopic for defect.
Fear comes at first; but soon, rejoiced,
You'll find your strong and tender loves,
Like holy rocks by Druids poised,
The least force shakes, but none removes.
Her strength is your esteem; beware
Of finding fault; her will's unnerved
By blame; from you 'twould be despair;
But praise that is not quite deserved
Will all her noble nature move
To make your utmost wishes true.
Yet think, while mending thus your Love,
Of matching her ideal too!
The death of nuptial joy is sloth;
To keep your mistress in your wife,
Keep to the very height your oath,
And honor her with arduous life.
Lastly, no personal reverence doff.
Life's all externals unto those
Who pluck the blushing petals off,
To find the secret of the rose.—
How long she's tarrying! Green's Hotel
I'm sure you'll like. The charge is fair,
The wines good. I remember well
I stayed once, with her mother, there.
A tender conscience of her vow
That mother had! She's so like her!"
But Mrs. Fife, much flurried, now
Whispered, "Miss Honor's ready, sir."
(1854)

### The Married Lover

Why, having won her, do I woo?
Because her spirit's vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
But, spirit-like, eludes embrace;
Because her womanhood is such
That, as on court-days subjects kiss
The Queen's hand, yet so near a touch
Affirms no mean familiarness,
Nay, rather marks more fair the height
Which can with safety so neglect
To dread, as lower ladies might,
That grace could meet with disrespect;
Thus she with happy favor feeds
Allegiance from a love so high
That thence no false conceit proceeds
Of difference bridged, or state put by;
Because, although in act and word
As lowly as a wife can be,
Her manners, when they call me lord,
Remind me 'tis by courtesy;
Not with her least consent of will,
Which would my proud affection hurt,
But by the noble style that still
Imputes an unattained desert;
Because her gay and lofty brows,
When all is won which hope can ask,
Reflect a light of hopeless snows
That bright in virgin ether bask;
Because, though free of the outer court
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
Sacred to heaven; because, in short,
She's not and never can be mine. (1854)

## PROPHETS WHO CANNOT SING

Ponder, ye Just, the scoffs that frequent go
From forth the foe:
"The holders of the Truth in Verity

---

24. **magnipotence,** great power.
*The Wedding Sermon.* 19. **Druids,** members of a religious order among the ancient Celts. Their places of worship were circles of rocks like those at Stonehenge, near Salisbury, England.

*The Married Lover.* 2. **vestal,** chaste. 29-31. **though free . . . heaven.** He thinks of his lover as a temple, like that at Jerusalem with its outer court and a sacred inaccessible inner shrine. The shrine is that part of the wife's personality which the husband cannot approach. Cf. Browning's *Two in the Campagna,* page 231.

*Prophets Who Cannot Sing.* This ode and the three that follow are taken from the volume of Odes published in 1868. They were later incorporated in *The Unknown Eros* (1877).

Are people of a harsh and stammering tongue!
The hedge-flower hath its song;
Meadow and wandering cloud
Find Seers who see,
And, with convincing music clear and loud,
Startle the adder-deafness of the crowd
By tones, O Love, from thee.
Views of the unveiled heavens alone forth bring
Prophets who cannot sing,
Praise that in chiming numbers will not run;
At least, from David until Dante, none,
And none since him.
Fish, and not swim?
They think they somehow should, and so they try;
But (haply 'tis they screw the pitch too high)
'Tis still their fates
To warble tunes that nails might draw from slates.
Poor Seraphim!
They mean to spoil our sleep, and do, but all their gains
Are curses for their pains!"

Now who but knows
That truth to learn from foes
Is wisdom ripe?
Therefore no longer let us stretch our throats
Till hoarse as frogs
With straining after notes
Which but to touch would burst an organ-pipe.
Far better be dumb dogs.
(1868)

## "FAINT YET PURSUING"

Heroic Good, target for which the young
Dream in their dreams that every bow is strung,
And, missing, sigh
Unfruitful, or as disbelievers die,
Thee having missed, I will not so revolt,
But lowlier shoot my bolt,
And lowlier still, if still I may not reach,
And my proud stomach teach
That less than highest is good, and may be high.
An even walk in life's uneven way,
Though to have dreamt of flight and not to fly
Be strange and sad,
Is not a boon that's given to all who pray.
If this I had
I'd envy none!
Nay, trod I straight for one
Year, month, or week,
Should Heaven withdraw, and Satan me amerce
Of power and joy, still would I seek
Another victory with a like reverse;
Because the god of victory does not die,
As dies the failure's curse,
And what we have to gain
Is, not one battle, but a weary life's campaign.
Yet meaner lot being sent
Should more than me content;
Yea, if I lie
Among vile shards, though born for silver wings,
In the strong flight and feathers gold
Of whatsoever heavenward mounts and sings
I must by admiration so comply
That there I should my own delight behold.
Yea, though I sin each day times seven,
And dare not lift the fearfullest eyes to Heaven,
Thanks must I give
Because that seven times are not eight or nine,
And that my darkness is all mine,
And that I live
Within this oak-shade one more minute even,
Hearing the winds their Maker magnify.
(1868)

## THE TWO DESERTS

Not greatly moved with awe am I
To learn that we may spy
Five thousand firmaments beyond our own.
The best that's known
Of the heavenly bodies does them credit small.
Viewed close, the Moon's fair ball
Is of ill objects worst,
A corpse in Night's highway, naked, fire-scarred, accurst;
And now they tell
That the Sun is plainly seen to boil and burst
Too horribly for hell.
So, judging from these two,
As we must do,
The Universe, outside our living Earth,
Was all conceived in the Creator's mirth,
Forecasting at the time Man's spirit deep,
To make dirt cheap.
Put by the Telescope!
Better without it man may see,
Stretched awful in the hushed midnight,
The ghost of his eternity.

---

14. **David**, the author of many of the Psalms. **Dante.** See note on *Dante at Verona*, page 507. 21. **Seraphim**, the highest order of angels—angels of love.

18. **amerce**, punish.

Give me the nobler glass that swells to the eye
The things which near us lie,
Till Science rapturously hails,
In the minutest water-drop,
A torment of innumerable tails.
These at the least do live.
But rather give
A mind not much to pry
Beyond our royal-fair estate
Betwixt these deserts blank of small and great.
Wonder and beauty our own courtiers are,
Pressing to catch our gaze,
And out of obvious ways
Ne'er wandering far.

(1868)

## DELICIÆ SAPIENTIÆ DE AMORE

Love, light for me
Thy ruddiest blazing torch,
That I, albeit a beggar by the Porch
Of the glad Palace of Virginity,
May gaze within, and sing the pomp I see;
For, crowned with roses all,
'Tis there, O Love, they keep thy festival!
But first warn off the beatific spot
Those wretched who have not
Even afar beheld the shining wall,
And those who, once beholding, have forgot,
And those, most vile, who dress
The charnel specter drear
Of utterly dishallowed nothingness
In that refulgent fame,
And cry Lo, here!
And name
The Lady whose smiles inflame
The sphere.
Bring, Love, anear,
And bid be not afraid
Young Lover true, and love-foreboding Maid,
And wedded Spouse, if virginal of thought;
For I will sing of naught
Less sweet to hear
Than seems
A music in their half-remembered dreams.

The magnet calls the steel:
Answers the iron to the magnet's breath;
What do they feel
But death!
The clouds of summer kiss in flame and rain,
And are not found again;
But the heavens themselves eternal are with fire
Of unapproached desire,
By the aching heart of Love, which cannot rest,
In blissfullest pathos so indeed possessed.
Oh, spousals high;
Oh, doctrine blest,
Unutterable in even the happiest sigh;
This know ye all
Who can recall
With what a welling of indignant tears
Love's simpleness first hears
The meaning of his mortal covenant,
And from what pride comes down
To wear the crown
Of which 'twas very heaven to feel the want.
How envies he the ways
Of yonder hopeless star,
And so would laugh and yearn
With trembling lids eterne,
Ineffably content from infinitely far
Only to gaze
On his bright Mistress's responding rays,
That never know eclipse;
And, once in his long year,
With præternuptial ecstasy and fear,
By the delicious law of that ellipse
Wherein all citizens of ether move,
With hastening pace to come
Nearer, though never near,
His Love
And always inaccessible sweet Home;
There on his path doubly to burn,
Kissed by her doubled light
That whispers of its source,
The ardent secret ever clothed with Night,
Then go forth in new force
Toward a new return,
Rejoicing as a Bridegroom on his course!
This know ye all;
Therefore gaze bold,
That so in you be joyful hope increased,
Thorough the Palace portals, and behold
The dainty and unsating Marriage-Feast.
Oh, hear
Them singing clear
"Cor meum et caro mea" round the "I Am,"
The Husband of the Heavens, and the Lamb
Whom they forever follow there that kept,
Or losing, never slept
Till they reconquered had in mortal fight
The standard white.
Oh, hear
From the harps they bore from Earth, five-strung, what music springs,
While the glad Spirits chide
The wondering strings!
And how the shining sacrificial Choirs,
Offering for aye their dearest hearts' desires,

---

*Deliciæ Sapientiæ de Amore.* The title means *Delights of Knowledge about Love.*

78. "Cor . . . mea," my heart and my flesh.

Which to their hearts come back beatified,
Hymn, the bright aisles along,
The nuptial song,
Song ever new to us and them, that saith,
"Hail Virgin in Virginity a Spouse!"
Heard first below
Within the little house
At Nazareth;
Heard yet in many a cell where brides of Christ
Lie hid, emparadised,
And where, although
By the hour 'tis night,
There's light,
The Day still lingering in the lap of snow.
Gaze and be not afraid,
Ye wedded few that honor, in sweet thought
And glittering will,
So freshly from the garden gather still
The lily sacrificed;
For ye, though self-suspected here for naught,
Are highly styled
With the thousands twelve times twelve of undefiled.
Gaze and be not afraid,
Young Lover true and love-foreboding Maid.
The full noon of deific vision bright
Abashes nor abates
No spark minute of Nature's keen delight.
'Tis there your Hymen waits!
There where in courts afar, all unconfused, they crowd,
As fumes the starlight soft
In gulfs of cloud,
And each to the other, well-content,
Sighs oft,
"'Twas this we meant!"
Gaze without blame
Ye in whom living Love yet blushes for dead shame.
There of pure Virgins none
Is fairer seen,
Save One,
Than Mary Magdalene,
Gaze without doubt or fear,
Ye to whom generous Love, by any name, is dear.
Love makes the life to be
A fount perpetual of virginity;
For, lo, the Elect
Of generous Love, how named soe'er, affect
Nothing but God,
Or mediate or direct,
Nothing but God,
The Husband of the Heavens:
And who Him love, in potence great or small,
Are, one and all,
Heirs of the Palace glad,
And inly clad
With the bridal robes of ardor virginal.

(1868)

## From *THE UNKNOWN EROS*

### A Farewell

With all my will, but much against my heart,
We two now part.
My Very Dear,
Our solace is, the sad road lies so clear.
It needs no art,
With faint, averted feet
And many a tear,
In our opposéd paths to persevere.
Go thou to East, I West.
We will not say
There's any hope, it is so far away.
But, O my Best!
When the one darling of our widowhead,
The nursling Grief,
Is dead,
And no dews blur our eyes
To see the peach-bloom come in evening skies,
Perchance we may,
Where now this night is day,
And even through faith of still averted feet,
Making full circle of our banishment,
Amazéd meet;
The bitter journey to the bourne so sweet
Seasoning the termless feast of our content
With tears of recognition never dry.

(1877)

### The Toys

My little son, who looked from thoughtful eyes,
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobeyed,
I struck him, and dismissed
With hard words and unkissed,
His mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darkened eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,

---

96. **Heard first**, by Mary from the angel Gabriel at Nazareth in Galilee (*Luke*, 1:26-38). 118. **Hymen**, god of marriage. 130. **Mary Magdalene.** See *Mary Magdalene* and note, page 525.

*The Unknown Eros.* Eros was the Greek god of love. The poem is really a collection of odes, forty-six in number, on various subjects. Some of the odes were reprinted from an earlier volume.
*The Toys.* See Critical Notes.

Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-veined stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I prayed
To God, I wept, and said:
"Ah, when at last we lie with trancéd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest of what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood,
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast molded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
'I will be sorry for their childishness.' "
(1877)

### Magna Est Veritas

Here, in this little bay,
Full of tumultuous life and great repose,
Where, twice a day,
The purposeless, glad ocean comes and goes,
Under high cliffs, and far from the huge town,
I sit me down.
For want of me the world's course will not fail—
When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;
The truth is great, and shall prevail
When none cares whether it prevail or not.
(1877)

### Departure

It was not like your great and gracious ways!
Do you, that have naught other to lament,
Never, my love, repent
Of how, that July afternoon,
You went,
With sudden, unintelligible phrase,
And frightened eye,
Upon your journey of so many days,
Without a single kiss or a good-by?
I knew, indeed, that you were parting soon;
And so we sate, within the low sun's rays,
You whispering to me, for your voice was weak,
Your harrowing praise.
Well, it was well, my wife,
To hear you such things speak,
And see your love
Make of your eyes a growing gloom of life,
As a warm south-wind sombers a March grove.
And it was like your great and gracious ways
To turn your talk on daily things, my dear,
Lifting the luminous, pathetic lash
To let the laughter flash,
Whilst I drew near,
Because you spoke so low that I could scarcely hear.
But all at once to leave me at the last,
More at the wonder than the loss aghast,
With huddled, unintelligible phrase,
And frightened eye,
And go your journey of all days
With not one kiss or a good-by,
And the only loveless look the look with which you passed,
'Twas all unlike your great and gracious ways.
(1877)

### The Azalea

There, where the sun shines first
Against our room,
She trained the gold azalea, whose perfume
She, spring-like, from her breathing grace dispersed.
Last night the delicate crests of saffron bloom,
For this their dainty likeness watched and nurst,
Were just at point to burst.
At dawn I dreamed, O God, that she was dead,
And groaned aloud upon my wretched bed,
And waked, ah, God, and did not waken her,
But lay, with eyes still closed,
Perfectly blessed in the delicious sphere
By which I knew so well that she was near,
My heart to speechless thankfulness composed.
Till 'gan to stir
A dizzy somewhat in my troubled head—
It *was* the azalea's breath, and she *was* dead!
The warm night had the lingering buds disclosed;
And I had fall'n asleep with to my breast
A chance-found letter pressed
In which she said,
"So, till tomorrow eve, my own, adieu!
Parting's well-paid with soon again to meet,
Soon in your arms to feel so small and sweet,
Sweet to myself that am so sweet to you!"
(1877)

---

17. **abraded . . . beach**, worn down by the waves and the sand.

*Magna Est Veritas.* The title means *Great Is Truth.* It is taken from the Apocryphal Book of *1 Esdras,* 4:41.—"Great is truth and strong above all things."

*The Azalea.* The azalea is a beautiful shrub with masses of pink, red, or yellow blossoms.

### REGINA CŒLI

Say, did his sisters wonder what could Joseph see
In a mild, silent little maid like thee?
And was it awful, in that narrow house,
With God for Babe and Spouse?
Nay, like thy simple, female sort, each one
Apt to find Him in Husband and in Son,
Nothing to thee came strange in this.
Thy wonder was but wondrous bliss:
Wondrous, for, though
True Virgin lives not but does know
(Howbeit none ever yet confessed),
That God lies really in her breast,
Of thine He made His special nest!
And so
All mothers worship little feet,
And kiss the very ground they've trod;
But, ah, thy little Baby sweet
Who was indeed thy God! (1878)

## JAMES THOMSON (1834-1882)

### ONCE IN A SAINTLY PASSION

Once in a saintly passion
I cried with desperate grief,
"O Lord, my heart is black with guile,
Of sinners I am chief."
Then stooped my guardian angel
And whispered from behind,
"Vanity, my little man,
You're nothing of the kind."

### FOR I MUST SING OF ALL I FEEL AND KNOW

For I must sing of all I feel and know,
Waiting with Memnon passive near the palms,
Until the heavenly light doth dawn and grow
And thrill my silence into mystic psalms;
From unknown realms the wind streams sad or gay,
The trees give voice responsive to its sway.

For I must sing: of mountains, deserts, seas,
Of rivers ever flowing, ever flowing;
Of beasts and birds, of grass and flowers and trees
Forever fading and forever growing;
Of calm and storm, of night and eve and noon,
Of boundless space, and sun and stars and moon;

And of the secret sympathies that bind
All beings to their wondrous dwelling-place;
And of the perfect Unity enshrined
In omnipresence throughout time and space,
Alike informing with its full control
The dust, the stars, the worm, the human soul;

And most supremely of my human kin —
Their thoughts and deeds, their valors and their fears,
Their griefs and joys, their virtue and their sin,
Their feasts and wars, their cradles and their biers,
Their temples, prisons, homes and ships and marts,
The subtlest windings of their brains and hearts.

So rich and sweet is Life. And what is Death? —
The tranquil slumbers dear and strange and boon
That feed at whiles our waking being's breath;
The solemn midnight of this glorious noon,
With countless distant stars, and each a sun,
Revealed harmonious with our daily one.
(*1857;* 1859)

### TWO SONNETS

#### 1

"Why are your songs all wild and bitter sad
As funeral dirges with the orphans' cries?
Each night since first the world was made hath had
A sequent day to laugh it down the skies.
Chant us a glee to make our hearts rejoice,
Or seal in silence this unmanly moan."
My friend, I have no power to rule my voice —
A spirit lifts me where I lie alone,
And thrills me into song by its own laws;
That which I feel, but seldom know, indeed
Tempering the melody it could not cause.
The bleeding heart cannot forever bleed
Inwardly solely; on the wan lips, too,
Dark blood will bubble ghastly into view.

#### 2

Striving to sing glad songs, I but attain
Wild discords sadder than Grief's saddest tune;

---

*Regina Cœli.* The title means *Queen of Heaven.*

*For I Must Sing of All I Feel and Know.* 2. **Memnon,** a colossal statue near Thebes, Egypt, which was supposed to give forth a musical sound at daybreak.

17. **informing,** animating, giving form to.

As if an owl with his harsh screech should
strain
To over-gratulate a thrush of June.
The nightingale upon its thorny spray
Finds inspiration in the sullen dark;
The kindling dawn, the world-wide joyous day
Are inspiration to the soaring lark;
The seas are silent in the sunny calm,
Their anthem surges in the tempest boom;
The skies outroll no solemn thunder psalm
Till they have clothed themselves with clouds
of gloom.
My mirth can laugh and talk, but cannot sing;
My grief finds harmonies in everything.
(1860)

## "AS WE RUSH, AS WE RUSH IN THE TRAIN"

As we rush, as we rush in the train,
The trees and the houses go wheeling back,
But the starry heavens above the plain
Come flying on our track.

All the beautiful stars of the sky,
The silver doves of the forest of Night,
Over the dull earth swarm and fly,
Companions of our flight.

We will rush ever on without fear;
Let the goal be far, the flight be fleet!
For we carry the Heavens with us, Dear,
While the Earth slips from our feet!
(*1863;* 1865)

## THE FIRE THAT FILLED MY HEART OF OLD

The fire that filled my heart of old
Gave luster while it burned;
Now only ashes gray and cold
Are in its silence urned.
Ah! better was the furious flame,
The splendor with the smart;
I never cared for the singer's fame,
But, oh! for the singer's heart
Once more —
The burning fulgent heart!

No love, no hate, no hope, no fear,
No anguish and no mirth;
Thus life extends from year to year,
A flat of sullen dearth.
Ah! life's blood creepeth cold and tame,
Life's thought plays no new part;
I never cared for the singer's fame,
But, oh! for the singer's heart
Once more —
The bleeding passionate heart!
(1864)

## From ART

"What precious thing are you making fast
In all these silken lines?
And where and to whom will it go at last?
Such subtle knots and twines!"

"I am tying up all my love in this,
With all its hopes and fears,
With all its anguish and all its bliss,
And its hours as heavy as years.

"I am going to send it afar, afar,
To I know not where above;
To that sphere beyond the highest star
Where dwells the soul of my Love.

"But in vain, in vain, would I make it fast
With countless subtle twines;
Forever its fire breaks out at last,
And shrivels all the lines." (1865)

## From SUNDAY UP THE RIVER

### 1

I looked out into the morning,
I looked out into the west:
The soft blue eye of the quiet sky
Still drooped in dreamy rest;

The trees were still like clouds there,
The clouds like mountains dim;
The broad mist lay, a silver bay
Whose tide was at the brim.

I looked out into the morning,
I looked out into the east:
The flood of light upon the night
Had silently increased;

The sky was pale with fervor,
The distant trees were gray,
The hill-lines drawn like waves of dawn
Dissolving in the day.

I looked out into the morning,
Looked east, looked west, with glee;
O richest day of happy May,
My love will spend with me!

### 2

"Oh, what are you waiting for here, young
man?
What are you looking for over the bridge?"

---

4. **over-gratulate,** surpass in expressing a feeling of joy.
5. **nightingale . . . spray.** The nightingale was supposed to sing more sweetly when a thorn was at its breast.

A little straw hat with the streaming blue ribbons
Is soon to come dancing over the bridge.

Her heart beats the measure that keeps her feet dancing,
Dancing along like a wave o' the sea;
Her heart pours the sunshine with which her eyes glancing
Light up strange faces in looking for me.

The strange faces brighten in meeting her glances;
The strangers all bless her, pure, lovely, and free.
She fancies she walks, but her walk skips and dances,
Her heart makes such music in coming to me.

Oh, thousands and thousands of happy young maidens
Are tripping this morning their sweethearts to see;
But none whose heart beats to a sweeter love-cadence
Than hers who will brighten the sunshine for me.

"Oh, what are you waiting for here, young man?
What are you looking for over the bridge?"
A little straw hat with the streaming blue ribbons;
— And here it comes dancing over the bridge!

15

Give a man a horse he can ride,
Give a man a boat he can sail;
And his rank and wealth, his strength and health,
On sea nor shore shall fail.

Give a man a pipe he can smoke,
Give a man a book he can read;
And his home is bright with a calm delight,
Though the room be poor indeed.

Give a man a girl he can love,
As I, O my Love, love thee;
And his heart is great with the pulse of Fate,
At home, on land, on sea.

17

Let my voice ring out and over the earth,
Through all the grief and strife,
With a golden joy in a silver mirth:
Thank God for Life!

Let my voice swell out through the great abyss
To the azure dome above,
With a chord of faith in the harp of bliss:
Thank God for Love!

Let my voice thrill out beneath and above,
The whole world through:
O my Love and Life, O my Life and Love,
Thank God for you!

18

The wine of Love is music,
And the feast of Love is song;
And when Love sits down to the banquet,
Love sits long;

Sits long and ariseth drunken,
But not with the feast and the wine;
He reeleth with his own heart,
That great rich Vine. (*1865;* 1869)

## WILLIAM BLAKE

He came to the desert of London town
Gray miles long;
He wandered up and he wandered down,
Singing a quiet song.

He came to the desert of London town,
Mirk miles broad;
He wandered up and he wandered down,
Ever alone with God.

There were thousands and thousands of human kind
In this desert of brick and stone;
But some were deaf and some were blind,
And he was there alone.

At length the good hour came; he died
As he had lived, alone.
He was not missed from the desert wide;
Perhaps he was found at the Throne.
(1866)

## L' ANCIEN RÉGIME

OR, THE GOOD OLD RULE

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king,
Our king all kings above?
A young girl brought him love;
And he dowered her with shame,
With a sort of infamous fame,
And then with lonely years
Of penance and bitter tears —
Love is scarcely the thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

---

*William Blake.* Cf. Rossetti's *William Blake,* page 542.

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king?
A statesman brought him planned
Justice for all the land;
And he in recompense got
Fierce struggle with brigue and plot,
Then a fall from lofty place
Into exile and disgrace —
Justice is never the thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king?
A writer brought him truth;
And first he imprisoned the youth,
And then he bestowed a free pyre
That the works might have plenty of fire,
And also to cure the pain
Of the headache called thought in the brain —
Truth is a very bad thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king?
The people brought their sure
Loyalty fervid and pure;
And he gave them bountiful spoil
Of taxes and hunger and toil,
Ignorance, brutish plight,
And wholesale slaughter in fight —
Loyalty's quite the worst thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king?
A courtier brought to his feet
Servility graceful and sweet,
With an ever ready smile
And an ever supple guile;
And he got in reward the place
Of the statesman in disgrace —
Servility's always a thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king?
A soldier brought him war,
*La gloire, la victoire,*
Ravage and carnage and groans,
For the pious *Te Deum* tones;
And he got in return for himself
Rank and honors and pelf —
War is a very fine thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king?
A harlot brought him her flesh,
Her lusts, and the manifold mesh
Of her wiles intervolved with caprice;
And he gave her his realm to fleece,
To corrupt, to ruin, and gave
Himself for her toy and her slave —
Harlotry's just the thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

Who has a thing to bring
For a gift to our lord the king,
Our king who fears to die?
A priest brought him a lie,
The blackness of hell uprolled
In heaven's shining gold;
And he got as guerdon for that
A see and a cardinal's hat —
A lie is an excellent thing
To bring as a gift for our king.

Has any one yet a thing
For a gift to our lord the king?
The country gave him a tomb,
A magnificent sleeping-room;
And for this it obtained some rest,
Clear riddance of many a pest,
And a hope which it much enjoyed
That the throne would continue void —
A tomb is the very best thing
For a gift to our lord the king. *(1867)*

## THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT

### PROEM

Lo, thus, as prostrate, "In the dust I write
My heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears."
Yet why evoke the specters of black night
To blot the sunshine of exultant years?
Why disinter dead faith from moldering hidden?
Why break the seals of mute despair unbidden,
And wail life's discords into careless ears?

Because a cold rage seizes one at whiles
To show the bitter old and wrinkled truth
Stripped naked of all vesture that beguiles,
False dreams, false hopes, false masks and modes of youth;
Because it gives some sense of power and passion

---

16. **brigue,** intrigue. 54. **La gloire, la victoire,** the glory, the victory. 56. **Te Deum,** the name of an ancient and famous Christian hymn beginning "*Te Deum laudamus*" ("We praise thee, O God").

*The City of Dreadful Night.* Many of the images and ideas of this poem pressed themselves upon Thomson as he wandered about the streets of London during periods of insomnia. What he presents, however, is a city of modern society, conceived as the result of a vast single process without objective aim. It thus becomes an imaginary City of Despair. Although the poem is suggestive of a philosophic and religious theorem, it is not to be loaded with ethical significance.

In helpless impotence to try to fashion
Our woe in living words howe'er uncouth.

Surely I write not for the hopeful young,
Or those who deem their happiness of worth,
Or such as pasture and grow fat among
The shows of life and feel nor doubt nor dearth,
Or pious spirits with a God above them
To sanctify and glorify and love them,
Or sages who foresee a heaven on earth.

For none of these I write, and none of these
Could read the writing if they deigned to try;
So may they flourish, in their due degrees,
On our sweet earth and in their unplaced sky.
If any cares for the weak words here written,
It must be someone desolate, Fate-smitten,
Whose faith and hope are dead, and who would die.

Yes, here and there some weary wanderer
In that same city of tremendous night,
Will understand the speech, and feel a stir
Of fellowship in all-disastrous fight;
"I suffer mute and lonely, yet another
Uplifts his voice to let me know a brother
Travels the same wild paths though out of sight."

O sad Fraternity, do I unfold
Your dolorous mysteries shrouded from of yore?
Nay, be assured — no secret can be told
To any who divined it not before;
None uninitiate by many a presage
Will comprehend the language of the message,
Although proclaimed aloud for evermore.

## I

The City is of Night; perchance of Death,
But certainly of Night; for never there
Can come the lucid morning's fragrant breath
After the dewy dawning's cold gray air;
The moon and stars may shine with scorn or pity;
The sun has never visited that city,
For it dissolveth in the daylight fair;

Dissolveth like a dream of night away,
Though present in distempered gloom of thought
And deadly weariness of heart all day.
But when a dream night after night is brought
Throughout a week, and such weeks few or many
Recur each year for several years, can any
Discern that dream from real life in aught?

For life is but a dream whose shapes return,
Some frequently, some seldom, some by night
And some by day, some night and day; we learn,
The while all change and many vanish quite,
In their recurrence with recurrent changes
A certain seeming order; where this ranges
We count things real; such is memory's might.

A river girds the city west and south,
The main north channel of a broad lagoon,
Regurging with the salt tides from the mouth;
Waste marshes shine and glister to the moon
For leagues, then moorland black, then stony ridges;
Great piers and causeways, many noble bridges,
Connect the town and islet suburbs strewn.

Upon an easy slope it lies at large,
And scarcely overlaps the long curved crest
Which swells out two leagues from the river marge.
A trackless wilderness rolls north and west,
Savannahs, savage woods, enormous mountains,
Bleak uplands, black ravines with torrent fountains;
And eastward rolls the shipless sea's unrest.

The city is not ruinous, although
Great ruins of an unremembered past,
With others of a few short years ago,
More sad, are found within its precincts vast.
The street-lamps always burn; but scarce a casement
In house or palace front from roof to basement
Doth glow or gleam athwart the mirk air cast.

The street-lamps burn amidst the baleful glooms,
Amidst the soundless solitudes immense
Of rangéd mansions dark and still as tombs.
The silence which benumbs or strains the sense
Fulfills with awe the soul's despair unweeping;
Myriads of habitants are ever sleeping,
Or dead, or fled from nameless pestilence!

Yet, as in some necropolis you find
Perchance one mourner to a thousand dead,
So there: worn faces that look deaf and blind

---

66. **Regurging**, surging back. 75. **Savannahs**, open, level regions. 92. **necropolis**, a city of the dead.

Like tragic masks of stone. With weary tread,
Each wrapped in his own doom, they wander, wander,
Or sit foredone and desolately ponder
Through sleepless hours with heavy drooping head.

Mature men chiefly, few in age or youth,
A woman rarely, now and then a child —
A child! If here the heart turns sick with ruth
To see a little one from birth defiled,
Or lame or blind, as preordained to languish
Through youthless life, think how it bleeds with anguish
To meet one erring in that homeless wild.

They often murmur to themselves, they speak
To one another seldom, for their woe
Broods maddening inwardly and scorns to wreak
Itself abroad; and if at whiles it grow
To frenzy which must rave, none heeds the clamor,
Unless there waits some victim of like glamour,
To rave in turn, who lends attentive show.

The City is of Night, but not of Sleep;
There sweet sleep is not for the weary brain;
The pitiless hours like years and ages creep,
A night seems termless hell. This dreadful strain
Of thought and consciousness, which never ceases,
Or which some moments' stupor but increases,
This, worse than woe, makes wretches there insane.

They leave all hope behind who enter there;
One certitude while sane they cannot leave,
One anodyne for torture and despair —
The certitude of Death, which no reprieve
Can put off long; and which, divinely tender,
But waits the outstretched hand to promptly render
That draft whose slumber nothing can bereave.

## 2

Because he seemed to walk with an intent
I followed him; who, shadowlike and frail,
Unswervingly though slowly onward went,
Regardless, wrapped in thought as in a veil.
Thus step for step with lonely sounding feet
We traveled many a long dim silent street.

At length he paused — a black mass in the gloom,
A tower that merged into the heavy sky;
Around, the huddled stones of grave and tomb —
Some old God's-acre now corruption's sty:
He murmured to himself with dull despair,
"Here Faith died, poisoned by this charnel air."

Then, turning to the right, went on once more,
And traveled weary roads without suspense;
And reached at last a low wall's open door,
Whose villa gleamed beyond the foliage dense.
He gazed, and muttered with a hard despair,
"Here Love died, stabbed by its own worshiped pair."

Then, turning to the right, resumed his march,
And traveled streets and lanes with wondrous strength,
Until on stooping through a narrow arch
We stood before a squalid house at length.
He gazed, and whispered with a cold despair,
"Here Hope died, starved out in its utmost lair."

When he had spoken thus, before he stirred,
I spoke, perplexed by something in the signs
Of desolation I had seen and heard
In this drear pilgrimage to ruined shrines:
"When Faith and Love and Hope are dead indeed,
Can Life still live? By what doth it proceed?"

As whom his one intense thought overpowers,
He answered coldly, "Take a watch, erase
The signs and figures of the circling hours,
Detach the hands, remove the dial-face;
The works proceed until run down, although
Bereft of purpose, void of use, still go."

Then, turning to the right, paced on again,
And traversed squares and traveled streets whose glooms
Seemed more and more familiar to my ken;
And reached that sullen temple of the tombs;
And paused to murmur with the old despair,
"Here Faith died, poisoned by this charnel air."

I ceased to follow, for the knot of doubt
Was severed sharply with a cruel knife;

---

105. **erring,** wandering. 120. **They . . . there.** Cf. the description over the portal to hell in Dante's *Inferno*— "Leave all hope, ye that enter."

136. **God's-acre,** cemetery.

He circled thus forever tracing out
The series of the fraction left of Life;
Perpetual recurrence in the scope
Of but three terms, dead Faith, dead Love, dead Hope.

### 3

Although lamps burn along the silent streets,
Even when moonlight silvers empty squares,
The dark holds countless lanes and close retreats;
But when the night its sphereless mantle wears,
The open spaces yawn with gloom abysmal,
The somber mansions loom immense and dismal,
The lanes are black as subterranean lairs.

And soon the eye a strange new vision learns:
The night remains for it as dark and dense,
Yet clearly in this darkness it discerns
As in the daylight with its natural sense;
Perceives a shade in shadow not obscurely,
Pursues a stir of black in blackness surely,
Sees specters also in the gloom intense.

The ear, too, with the silence vast and deep
Becomes familiar though unreconciled;
Hears breathings as of hidden life asleep,
And muffled throbs as of pent passions wild,
Far murmurs, speech of pity or derision;
But all more dubious than the things of vision,
So that it knows not when it is beguiled.

No time abates the first despair and awe,
But wonder ceases soon; the weirdest thing
Is felt least strange beneath the lawless law
Where Death-in-Life is the eternal king;
Crushed impotent beneath this reign of terror,
Dazed with such mysteries of woe and error,
The soul is too outworn for wondering.

### 4

He stood alone within the spacious square,
Declaiming from the central grassy mound,
With head uncovered and with streaming hair,
As if large multitudes were gathered round—
A stalwart shape, the gestures full of might,
The glances burning with unnatural light:

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: All was black,
In heaven no single star, on earth no track;
A brooding hush without a stir or note,
The air so thick it clotted in my throat;
And thus for hours; then some enormous things
Swooped past with savage cries and clanking wings.
But I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Eyes of fire
Glared at me throbbing with a starved desire;
The hoarse and heavy and carnivorous breath
Was hot upon me from deep jaws of death;
Sharp claws, swift talons, fleshless fingers cold
Plucked at me from the bushes, tried to hold.
But I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Lo you, there,
That hillock burning with a brazen glare;
Those myriad dusky flames with points a-glow
Which writhed and hissed and darted to and fro;
A Sabbath of the Serpents, heaped pell-mell
For Devil's roll-call and some fête of hell.
Yet I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Meteors ran
And crossed their javelins on the black sky-span;
The zenith opened to a gulf of flame,
The dreadful thunderbolts jarred earth's fixed frame;
The ground all heaved in waves of fire that surged
And weltered round me sole there unsubmerged.
Yet I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Air once more,
And I was close upon a wild seashore;
Enormous cliffs arose on either hand,
The deep tide thundered up a league-broad strand;
White foambelts seethed there, wan spray swept and flew;
The sky broke, moon and stars and clouds and blue.
And I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: On the left
The sun arose and crowned a broad crag-cleft;

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232. **Sabbath of the Serpents**, a midnight meeting supposed to be held annually by demons, witches, etc., under the leadership of Satan, for the purpose of celebrating their orgies.

There stopped and burned out black, except a rim,
A bleeding, eyeless socket, red and dim;
Whereon the moon fell suddenly southwest,
And stood above the right-hand cliffs at rest.
Still I strode on austere;
No hope could have no fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: From the right
A shape came slowly with a ruddy light;
A woman with a red lamp in her hand,
Bareheaded and barefooted on that strand;
O desolation moving with such grace!
O anguish with such beauty in thy face!
I fell as on my bier,
Hope travailed with such fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: I was twain,
Two selves distinct that cannot join again;
One stood apart and knew but could not stir,
And watched the other stark in swoon and her;
And she came on, and never turned aside,
Between such sun and moon and roaring tide.
And as she came more near
My soul grew mad with fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: Hell is mild
And piteous matched with that accursèd wild;
A large black sign was on her breast that bowed,
A broad black band ran down her snow-white shroud;
That lamp she held was her own burning heart,
Whose blood-drops trickled step by step apart.
The mystery was clear;
Mad rage had swallowed fear.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: By the sea
She knelt and bent above that senseless me;
Those lamp-drops fell upon my white brow there,
She tried to cleanse them with her tears and hair;
She murmured words of pity, love, and woe,
She heeded not the level rushing flow.
And mad with rage and fear,
I stood stonebound so near.

"As I came through the desert thus it was,
As I came through the desert: When the tide
Swept up to her there kneeling by my side,
She clasped that corpse-like me, and they were borne
Away, and this vile me was left forlorn;
I know the whole sea cannot quench that heart,
Or cleanse that brow, or wash those two apart.
They love; their doom is drear,
Yet they nor hope nor fear;
But I, what do I here?"

### 5

How he arrives there none can clearly know;
Athwart the mountains and immense wild tracts,
Or flung a waif upon that vast sea-flow,
Or down the river's boiling cataracts.
To reach it is as dying fever-stricken;
To leave it, slow faint birth intense pangs quicken;
And memory swoons in both the tragic acts.

But being there one feels a citizen;
Escape seems hopeless to the heart forlorn—
Can Death-in-Life be brought to life again?
And yet release does come; there comes a morn
When he awakes from slumbering so sweetly
That all the world is changed for him completely,
And he is verily as if new-born.

He scarcely can believe the blissful change,
He weeps perchance who wept not while accurst;
Never again will he approach the range
Infected by that evil spell now burst.
Poor wretch! who once hath paced that dolent city
Shall pace it often, doomed beyond all pity,
With horror ever deepening from the first.

Though he possess sweet babes and loving wife,
A home of peace by loyal friendships cheered,
And love them more than death or happy life,
They shall avail not; he must dree his weird;
Renounce all blessings for that imprecation,
Steal forth and haunt that builded desolation,
Of woe and terrors and thick darkness reared.

### 6

I sat forlornly by the river-side,
And watched the bridge-lamps glow like golden stars
Above the blackness of the swelling tide,

327. **dolent**, sorrowful. 333. **dree his weird**, endure his fate.

Down which they struck rough gold in ruddier bars;
And heard the heave and splashing of the flow
Against the wall a dozen feet below.

Large elm-trees stood along that river-walk;
And under one, a few steps from my seat,
I heard strange voices join in stranger talk,
Although I had not heard approaching feet;
These bodiless voices in my waking dream
Flowed dark words blending with the somber stream:

"And you have after all come back; come back.
I was about to follow on your track.
And you have failed; our spark of hope is black."

"That I have failed is proved by my return;
The spark is quenched, nor ever more will burn.
But listen; and the story you shall learn.

"I reached the portal common spirits fear,
And read the words above it, dark yet clear,
'Leave hope behind, all ye who enter here';

"And would have passed in, gratified to gain
That positive eternity of pain,
Instead of this insufferable inane.

"A demon warder clutched me, 'Not so fast;
First leave your hopes behind!' — 'But years have passed
Since I left all behind me, to the last.

" 'You cannot count for hope, with all your wit,
This bleak despair that drives me to the Pit;
How could I seek to enter void of it?'

"He snarled, 'What thing is this which apes a soul,
And would find entrance to our gulf of dole
Without the payment of the settled toll?'

"Outside the gate he showed an open chest.
'Here pay their entrance fees the souls unblest;
Cast in some hope, you enter with the rest.

" 'This is Pandora's box, whose lid shall shut,
And Hell-gate too, when hopes have filled it; but
They are so thin that it will never glut.'

"I stood a few steps backwards, desolate;
And watched the spirits pass me to their fate,
And fling off hope, and enter at the gate.

"When one casts off a load he springs upright,
Squares back his shoulders, breathes with all his might,
And briskly paces forward strong and light;

"But these, as if they took some burden, bowed;
The whole frame sank; however strong and proud
Before, they crept in quite infirm and cowed.

"And as they passed me, earnestly from each
A morsel of his hope I did beseech,
To pay my entrance; but all mocked my speech.

"Not one would cede a tittle of his store,
Though knowing that in instants three or four
He must resign the whole for evermore.

"So I returned. Our destiny is fell;
For in this Limbo we must ever dwell,
Shut out alike from heaven and earth and hell."

The other sighed back, "Yea; but if we grope
With care through all this Limbo's dreary scope,
We yet may pick up some minute lost hope;

"And, sharing it between us, entrance win,
In spite of fiends so jealous for gross sin.
Let us without delay our search begin."

### 7

Some say that phantoms haunt those shadowy streets,
And mingle freely there with sparse mankind;
And tell of ancient woes and black defeats,
And murmur mysteries in the grave enshrined.
But others think them visions of illusion,
Or even men gone far in self-confusion,
No man there being wholly sane in mind.

---

373. **Pandora's box.** Pandora, a beautiful woman created to punish mankind because Prometheus had stolen fire from heaven, opened a box containing all human ills, which escaped over the earth. A later tradition had the blessings of the gods escape from the box, with the exception of hope, which was saved for the human race.

391. **fell,** cruel. 392. **Limbo,** a region supposed to lie on the border of hell as the abode of the just who died before Christ's coming.

And yet a man who raves, however mad,
Who bares his heart and tells of his own fall,
Reserves some inmost secret good or bad;
The phantoms have no reticence at all—
The nudity of flesh will blush though tameless,
The extreme nudity of bone grins shameless,
The unsexed skeleton mocks shroud and pall.

I have seen phantoms there that were as men
And men that were as phantoms flit and roam;
Marked shapes that were not living to my ken,
Caught breathings acrid as with Dead Sea foam.
The City rests for man so weird and awful,
That his intrusion there might seem unlawful,
And phantoms there may have their proper home.

### 8

While I still lingered on that river-walk,
And watched the tide as black as our black doom,
I heard another couple join in talk,
And saw them to the left hand in the gloom
Seated against an elm bole on the ground,
Their eyes intent upon the stream profound.

"I never knew another man on earth
But had some joy and solace in his life,
Some chance of triumph in the dreadful strife;
My doom has been unmitigated dearth."

"We gaze upon the river, and we note
The various vessels large and small that float,
Ignoring every wrecked and sunken boat."

"And yet I asked no splendid dower, no spoil
Of sway or fame or rank or even wealth;
But homely love with common food and health,
And nightly sleep to balance daily toil."

"This all-too humble soul would arrogate
Unto itself some signalizing hate
From the supreme indifference of Fate!"

"Who is most wretched in this dolorous place?
I think myself; yet I would rather be
My miserable self than He, than He
Who formed such creatures to His own disgrace.

"The vilest thing must be less vile than Thou
From whom it had its being, God and Lord!
Creator of all woe and sin! abhorred,
Malignant and implacable! I vow

"That not for all Thy power furled and unfurled,
For all the temples to Thy glory built,
Would I assume the ignominious guilt
Of having made such men in such a world."

"As if a Being, God or Fiend, could reign,
At once so wicked, foolish, and insane,
As to produce men when He might refrain!

"The world rolls round forever like a mill;
It grinds out death and life and good and ill;
It has no purpose, heart or mind or will.

"While air of Space and Time's full river flow
The mill must blindly whirl unresting so;
It may be wearing out, but who can know?

"Man might know one thing were his sight less dim;
That it whirls not to suit his petty whim,
That it is quite indifferent to him.

"Nay, does it treat him harshly as he saith?
It grinds him some slow years of bitter breath,
Then grinds him back into eternal death."

### 9

It is full strange to him who hears and feels,
When wandering there in some deserted street,
The booming and the jar of ponderous wheels,
The trampling clash of heavy ironshod feet:
Who in this Venice of the Black Sea rideth?
Who in this city of the stars abideth
To buy or sell as those in daylight sweet?

The rolling thunder seems to fill the sky
As it comes on; the horses snort and strain,
The harness jingles, as it passes by;
The hugeness of an overburthened wain —
A man sits nodding on the shaft or trudges,
Three parts asleep beside his fellow-drudges;
And so it rolls into the night again.

What merchandise? whence, whither, and for whom?
Perchance it is a Fate-appointed hearse,
Bearing away to some mysterious tomb
Or Limbo of the scornful universe
The joy, the peace, the life-hope, the abortions
Of all things good which should have been our portions,
But have been strangled by that City's curse.

---

472. **Venice . . . Sea**, the City of Dreadful Night. 478. **wain**, wagon.

10

The mansion stood apart in its own ground;
In front thereof a fragrant garden-lawn,
High trees about it, and the whole walled round.
The massive iron gates were both withdrawn;
And every window of its front shed light,
Portentous in that City of the Night.

But though thus lighted, it was deadly still
As all the countless bulks of solid gloom;
Perchance a congregation to fulfill
Solemnities of silence in this doom,
Mysterious rites of dolor and despair
Permitting not a breath of chant or prayer?

Broad steps ascended to a terrace broad
Whereon lay still light from the open door;
The hall was noble, and its aspect awed,
Hung round with heavy black from dome to floor;
And ample stairways rose to left and right
Whose balustrades were also draped with night.

I paced from room to room, from hall to hall,
Nor any life throughout the maze discerned;
But each was hung with its funereal pall,
And held a shrine, around which tapers burned,
With picture or with statue or with bust,
All copied from the same fair form of dust —

A woman very young and very fair;
Beloved by bounteous life and joy and youth,
And loving these sweet lovers, so that care
And age and death seemed not for her in sooth.
Alike as stars, all beautiful and bright,
These shapes lit up that mausoléan night.

At length I heard a murmur as of lips,
And reached an open oratory hung
With heaviest blackness of the whole eclipse;
Beneath the dome a fuming censer swung;
And one lay there upon a low white bed,
With tapers burning at the foot and head —

The Lady of the images. Supine,
Deathstill, lifesweet, with folded palms she lay;
And kneeling there, as at a sacred shrine,
A young man wan and worn who seemed to pray;
A crucifix of dim and ghostly white
Surmounted the large altar left in night —

"The chambers of the mansion of my heart,
In every one whereof thine image dwells,
Are black with grief eternal for thy sake.

"The inmost oratory of my soul,
Wherein thou ever dwellest quick or dead,
Is black with grief eternal for thy sake.

"I kneel beside thee and I clasp the cross
With eyes forever fixed upon that face,
So beautiful and dreadful in its calm.

"I kneel here patient as thou liest there;
As patient as a statue carved in stone,
Of adoration and eternal grief.

"Whilst thou dost not awake I cannot move;
And something tells me thou wilt never wake
And I alive feel turning into stone.

"Most beautiful were Death to end my grief,
Most hateful to destroy the sight of thee,
Dear vision better than all death or life.

"But I renounce all choice of life or death,
For either shall be ever at thy side,
And thus in bliss or woe be ever well."

He murmured thus and thus in monotone,
Intent upon that uncorrupted face,
Entranced except his moving lips alone.
I glided with hushed footsteps from the place.
This was the festival that filled with light
That palace in the City of the Night.

11

What men are they who haunt these fatal glooms,
And fill their living mouths with dust of death,
And make their habitations in the tombs,
And breathe eternal sighs with mortal breath,
And pierce life's pleasant veil of various error
To reach that void of darkness and old terror
Wherein expire the lamps of hope and faith?

They have much wisdom, yet they are not wise;
They have much goodness, yet they do not well
(The fools we know have their own paradise,
The wicked also have their proper hell);
They have much strength, but still their doom is stronger;
Much patience, but their time endureth longer;
Much valor, but life mocks it with some spell.

---

520. **oratory**, a room or chapel set apart for private devotions.

They are most rational and yet insane —
An outward madness, not to be controlled;
A perfect reason in the central brain,
Which has no power, but sitteth wan and cold,
And sees the madness, and foresees as plainly
The ruin in its path, and trieth vainly
To cheat itself refusing to behold.

And some are great in rank and wealth and power,
And some renowned for genius and for worth;
And some are poor and mean, who brood and cower
And shrink from notice, and accept all dearth
Of body, heart and soul, and leave to others
All boons of life; yet these and those are brothers,
The saddest and the weariest men on earth.

### 12

Our isolated units could be brought
To act together for some common end?
For one by one, each silent with his thought,
I marked a long loose line approach and wend
Athwart the great cathedral's cloistered square,
And slowly vanish from the moonlit air.

Then I would follow in among the last;
And in the porch a shrouded figure stood,
Who challenged each one pausing ere he passed,
With deep eyes burning through a blank white hood:
"Whence come you in the world of life and light
To this our City of Tremendous Night?"

"From pleading in a senate of rich lords
For some scant justice to our countless hordes
Who toil half-starved with scarce a human right —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From wandering through many a solemn scene
Of opium visions, with a heart serene
And intellect miraculously bright —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From making hundreds laugh and roar with glee
By my transcendent feats of mimicry,
And humor wanton as an elfish sprite —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From prayer and fasting in a lonely cell,
Which brought an ecstasy ineffable
Of love and adoration and delight —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From ruling on a splendid kingly throne
A nation which beneath my rule has grown
Year after year in wealth and arts and might —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From preaching to an audience fired with faith
The Lamb who died to save our souls from death,
Whose blood hath washed our scarlet sins wool-white —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From drinking fiery poison in a den
Crowded with tawdry girls and squalid men,
Who hoarsely laugh and curse and brawl and fight —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From picturing with all beauty and all grace
First Eden and the parents of our race,
A luminous rapture unto all men's sight —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From writing a great work with patient plan
To justify the ways of God to man,
And show how ill must fade and perish quite —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

"From desperate fighting with a little band
Against the powerful tyrants of our land,
To free our brethren in their own despite —
I wake from daydreams to this real night."

Thus, challenged by that warder sad and stern,
Each one responded with his countersign,
Then entered the cathedral; and in turn
I entered also, having given mine,
But lingered near until I heard no more,
And marked the closing of the massive door.

### 13

Of all things human which are strange and wild
This is perchance the wildest and most strange,

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620. **blood . . . wool-white.** From *Isaiah,* 1:18.— "Though your sins be . . . red like crimson, they shall be as wool." 631. **justify . . . man.** Milton thus states his purpose in writing *Paradise Lost*—

> "That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to man." (I, 24-26)

And showeth man most utterly beguiled,
To those who haunt that sunless City's range —
That he bemoans himself for aye, repeating
How time is deadly swift, how life is fleeting,
How naught is constant on the earth but change.

The hours are heavy on him and the days;
The burden of the months he scarce can bear;
And often in his secret soul he prays
To sleep through barren periods unaware,
Arousing at some longed-for date of pleasure;
Which having passed and yielded him small treasure,
He would outsleep another term of care.

Yet in his marvelous fancy he must make
Quick wings for Time, and see it fly from us—
This Time which crawleth like a monstrous snake,
Wounded and slow and very venomous;
Which creeps blindwormlike round the earth and ocean,
Distilling poison at each painful motion,
And seems condemned to circle ever thus.

And since he cannot spend and use aright
The little time here given him in trust,
But wasteth it in weary undelight
Of foolish toil and trouble, strife and lust,
He naturally claimeth to inherit
The everlasting Future, that his merit
May have full scope—as surely is most just.

O length of the intolerable hours,
O nights that are as æons of slow pain,
O Time, too ample for our vital powers,
O Life, whose woeful vanities remain
Immutable for all of all our legions
Through all the centuries and in all the regions,
Not of your speed and variance *we* complain.

*We* do not ask a longer term of strife,
Weakness and weariness and nameless woes;
We do not claim renewed and endless life
When this which is our torment here shall close,
An everlasting conscious inanition!
We yearn for speedy death in full fruition,
Dateless oblivion and divine repose.

## 14

Large glooms were gathered in the mighty fane,
With tinted moongleams slanting here and there;
And all was hush — no swelling organ-strain,
No chant, no voice or murmuring of prayer;
No priests came forth, no tinkling censers fumed,
And the high altar space was unillumed.

Around the pillars and against the walls
Leaned men and shadows; others seemed to brood,
Bent or recumbent, in secluded stalls.
Perchance they were not a great multitude
Save in that city of so lonely streets
Where one may count up every face he meets.

All patiently awaited the event
Without a stir or sound, as if no less
Self-occupied, doomstricken, while attent.
And then we heard a voice of solemn stress
From the dark pulpit, and our gaze there met
Two eyes which burned as never eyes burned yet —

Two steadfast and intolerable eyes
Burning beneath a broad and rugged brow;
The head behind it of enormous size.
And as black fir-groves in a large wind bow,
Our rooted congregation, gloom-arrayed,
By that great sad voice deep and full were swayed:

"O melancholy Brothers, dark, dark, dark!
O battling in black floods without an ark!
O spectral wanderers of unholy Night!
My soul hath bled for you these sunless years,
With bitter blood-drops running down like tears;
Oh, dark, dark, dark, withdrawn from joy and light!

"My heart is sick with anguish for your bale;
Your woe hath been my anguish; yea, I quail
And perish in your perishing unblest.
And I have searched the heights and depths, the scope
Of all our universe, with desperate hope
To find some solace for your wild unrest.

"And now at last authentic word I bring,
Witnessed by every dead and living thing;
Good tidings of great joy for you, for all;
There is no God; no Fiend with names divine
Made us and tortures us; if we must pine,
It is to satiate no Being's gall.

"It was the dark delusion of a dream,
That living Person conscious and supreme,
Whom we must curse for cursing us with life;
Whom we must curse because the life He gave

Could not be buried in the quiet grave,
Could not be killed by poison or by knife.

"This little life is all we must endure,
The grave's most holy peace is ever sure,
We fall asleep and never wake again;
Nothing is of us but the moldering flesh,
Whose elements dissolve and merge afresh
In earth, air, water, plants, and other men.

"We finish thus; and all our wretched race
Shall finish with its cycle, and give place
To other beings, with their own time-doom;
Infinite æons ere our kind began;
Infinite æons after the last man
Has joined the mammoth in earth's tomb and womb.

"We bow down to the universal laws,
Which never had for man a special clause
Of cruelty or kindness, love or hate;
If toads and vultures are obscene to sight,
If tigers burn with beauty and with might,
Is it by favor or by wrath of fate?

"All substance lives and struggles evermore
Through countless shapes continually at war,
By countless interactions interknit;
If one is born a certain day on earth,
All times and forces tended to that birth,
Not all the world could change or hinder it.

"I find no hint throughout the Universe
Of good or ill, of blessing or of curse;
I find alone Necessity Supreme;
With infinite Mystery, abysmal, dark,
Unlighted ever by the faintest spark
For us the flitting shadows of a dream.

"O Brothers of sad lives! they are so brief;
A few short years must bring us all relief —
Can we not bear these years of laboring breath?
But if you would not this poor life fulfill,
Lo, you are free to end it when you will,
Without the fear of waking after death."

The organ-like vibrations of his voice
Thrilled through the vaulted aisles and died away;
The yearning of the tones which bade rejoice
Was sad and tender as a requiem lay;
Our shadowy congregation rested still
As brooding on that "End it when you will."

### 15

Wherever men are gathered, all the air
Is charged with human feeling, human thought;
Each shout and cry and laugh, each curse and prayer,
Are into its vibrations surely wrought;
Unspoken passion, wordless meditation,
Are breathed into it with our respiration;
It is with our life fraught and overfraught.

So that no man there breathes earth's simple breath,
As if alone on mountains or wide seas;
But nourishes warm life or hastens death
With joys and sorrows, health and foul disease,
Wisdom and folly, good and evil labors,
Incessant of his multitudinous neighbors;
He in his turn affecting all of these.

That City's atmosphere is dark and dense,
Although not many exiles wander there,
With many a potent evil influence,
Each adding poison to the poisoned air;
Infections of unutterable sadness,
Infections of incalculable madness,
Infections of incurable despair.

### 16

Our shadowy congregation rested still,
As musing on that message we had heard
And brooding on that "End it when you will";
Perchance awaiting yet some other word;
When keen as lightning through a muffled sky
Sprang forth a shrill and lamentable cry —

"The man speaks sooth, alas! the man speaks sooth;
We have no personal life beyond the grave;
There is no God; Fate knows nor wrath nor ruth.
Can I find here the comfort which I crave?

"In all eternity I had one chance,
One few years' term of gracious human life:
The splendors of the intellect's advance;
The sweetness of the home with babes and wife;

"The social pleasures with their genial wit;
The fascination of the worlds of art;
The glories of the worlds of nature, lit
By large imagination's glowing heart;

"The rapture of mere being, full of health;
The careless childhood and the ardent youth,
The strenuous manhood winning various wealth,
The reverend age serene with life's long truth —

"All the sublime prerogatives of Man;
The storied memories of the times of old,
The patient tracking of the world's great plan
Through sequences and changes myriad-fold.

"This chance was never offered me before;
For me the infinite Past is blank and dumb.
This chance recurreth never, nevermore;
Blank, blank for me the infinite To-come.

"And this sole chance was frustrate from my birth,
A mockery, a delusion; and my breath
Of noble human life upon this earth
So racks me that I sigh for senseless death.

"My wine of life is poison mixed with gall,
My noonday passes in a nightmare dream,
I worse than lose the years which are my all;
What can console me for the loss supreme?

"Speak not of comfort where no comfort is,
Speak not at all; can words make foul things fair?
Our life's a cheat, our death a black abyss;
Hush and be mute, envisaging despair."

This vehement voice came from the northern aisle,
Rapid and shrill to its abrupt harsh close;
And none gave answer for a certain while,
For words must shrink from these most wordless woes;
At last the pulpit speaker simply said,
With humid eyes and thoughtful drooping head:

"My brother, my poor brothers, it is thus:
This life itself holds nothing good for us,
But it ends soon and nevermore can be;
And we knew nothing of it ere our birth,
And shall know nothing when consigned to earth.
I ponder these thoughts, and they comfort me."

### 17

How the moon triumphs through the endless nights!
How the stars throb and glitter as they wheel
Their thick processions of supernal lights
Around the blue vault obdurate as steel!
And men regard with passionate awe and yearning
The mighty marching and the golden burning,
And think the heavens respond to what they feel.

Boats gliding like dark shadows of a dream,
Are glorified from vision as they pass
The quivering moonbridge on the deep black stream;
Cold windows kindle their dead glooms of glass
To restless crystals; cornice, dome, and column
Emerge from chaos in the splendor solemn;
Like faëry lakes gleam lawns of dewy grass.

With such a living light these dead eyes shine,
These eyes of sightless heaven, that as we gaze
We read a pity, tremulous, divine,
Or cold majestic scorn in their pure rays.
Fond man! they are not haughty, are not tender;
There is no heart or mind in all their splendor,
They thread mere puppets all their marvelous maze.

If we could near them with the flight unflown,
We should but find them worlds as sad as this,
Or suns all self-consuming like our own
Enringed by planet worlds as much amiss.
They wax and wane through fusion and confusion;
The spheres eternal are a grand illusion,
The empyréan is a void abyss.

### 18

I wandered in a suburb of the north,
And reached a spot whence three close lanes led down,
Beneath thick trees and hedgerows winding forth
Like deep brook channels, deep and dark and lown.
The air above was wan with misty light;
The dull gray south showed one vague blur of white.

I took the left-hand lane and slowly trod
Its earthen footpath, brushing as I went
The humid leafage; and my feet were shod
With heavy languor, and my frame downbent,
With infinite sleepless weariness outworn,
So many nights I thus had paced forlorn.

After a hundred steps I grew aware
Of something crawling in the lane below;
It seemed a wounded creature prostrate there
That sobbed with pangs in making progress slow,
The hind limbs stretched to push, the fore limbs then
To drag; for it would die in its own den.

But coming level with it I discerned
That it had been a man; for at my tread
It stopped in its sore travail and half turned,
Leaning upon its right, and raised its head,
And with the left hand twitched back as in ire
Long gray unreverend locks befouled with mire —

A haggard filthy face with bloodshot eyes,
An infamy for manhood to behold.
He gasped all trembling, "What, you want my prize?
You leave, to rob me, wine and lust and gold
And all that men go mad upon, since you
Have traced my sacred secret of the clue?

"You think that I am weak and must submit;
Yet I but scratch you with this poisoned blade,
And you are dead as if I clove with it
That false fierce greedy heart. Betrayed! betrayed!
I fling this phial if you seek to pass,
And you are forthwith shriveled up like grass."

And then with sudden change, "Take thought! take thought!
Have pity on me! it is mine alone.
If you could find, it would avail you naught;
Seek elsewhere on the pathway of your own.
For who of mortal or immortal race
The lifetrack of another can retrace?

"Did you but know my agony and toil!
Two lanes diverge up yonder from this lane;
My thin blood marks the long length of their soil;
Such clue I left, who sought my clue in vain.
My hands and knees are worn both flesh and bone;
I cannot move but with continual moan.

"But I am in the very way at last
To find the long-lost broken golden thread
Which reunites my present with my past,
If you but go your own way." And I said,
"I will retire as soon as you have told
Whereunto leadeth this lost thread of gold."

"And so you know it not!" he hissed with scorn;
"I feared you, imbecile! It leads me back
From this accurséd night without a morn,
And through the deserts which have else no track,
And through vast wastes of horror-haunted time,
To Eden innocence in Eden's clime;

"And I become a nursling soft and pure,
An infant cradled on its mother's knee,
Without a past, love-cherished and secure;
Which if it saw this loathsome present Me,
Would plunge its face into the pillowing breast,
And scream abhorrence hard to lull to rest."

He turned to grope; and I, retiring, brushed
Thin shreds of gossamer from off my face,
And mused, His life would grow, the germ uncrushed;
He should to antenatal night retrace,
And hide his elements in that large womb
Beyond the reach of man-evolving Doom.

And even thus, what weary way were planned,
To seek oblivion through the far-off gate
Of birth, when that of death is close at hand!
For this is law, if law there be in Fate:
What never has been, yet may have its when;
The thing which has been, never is again.

## 19

The mighty river flowing dark and deep,
With ebb and flood from the remote sea-tides
Vague-sounding through the City's sleepless sleep,
Is named the River of the Suicides;
For night by night some lorn wretch overweary,
And shuddering from the future yet more dreary,
Within its cold secure oblivion hides.

One plunges from a bridge's parapet,
As by some blind and sudden frenzy hurled;
Another wades in slow with purpose set
Until the waters are above him furled;
Another in a boat with dreamlike motion
Glides drifting down into the desert ocean,
To starve or sink from out the desert world.

They perish from their suffering surely thus,
For none beholding them attempts to save,
The while each thinks how soon, solicitous,
He may seek refuge in the selfsame wave;
Some hour when tired of ever-vain endurance
Impatience will forerun the sweet assurance
Of perfect peace eventual in the grave.

When this poor tragic-farce has palled us long,
Why actors and spectators do we stay? —
To fill our so-short *rôles* out right or wrong;

To see what shifts are yet in the dull play
For our illusion; to refrain from grieving
Dear foolish friends by our untimely leaving—
But those asleep at home, how blest are they!

Yet it is but for one night after all;
What matters one brief night of dreary pain?
When after it the weary eyelids fall
Upon the weary eyes and wasted brain;
And all sad scenes and thoughts and feelings vanish
In that sweet sleep no power can ever banish,
That one best sleep which never wakes again.

20

I sat me weary on a pillar's base,
And leaned against the shaft; for broad moonlight
O'erflowed the peacefulness of cloistered space,
A shore of shadow slanting from the right.
The great cathedral's western front stood there,
A wave-worn rock in that calm sea of air.

Before it, opposite my place of rest,
Two figures faced each other, large, austere;
A couchant sphinx in shadow to the breast,
An angel standing in the moonlight clear;
So mighty by magnificence of form,
They were not dwarfed beneath that mass enorm.

Upon the cross-hilt of a naked sword
The angel's hands, as prompt to smite, were held;
His vigilant, intense regard was poured
Upon the creature placidly unquelled,
Whose front was set at level gaze which took
No heed of aught, a solemn trance-like look.

And as I pondered these opposéd shapes
My eyelids sank in stupor, that dull swoon
Which drugs and with a leaden mantle drapes
The outworn to worse weariness. But soon
A sharp and clashing noise the stillness broke,
And from the evil lethargy I woke.

The angel's wings had fallen, stone on stone,
And lay there shattered; hence the sudden sound.
A warrior leaning on his sword alone
Now watched the sphinx with that regard profound;
The sphinx unchanged looked forthright, as aware
Of nothing in the vast abyss of air.

Again I sank in that repose unsweet,
Again a clashing noise my slumber rent;
The warrior's sword lay broken at his feet;
An unarmed man with raised hands impotent
Now stood before the sphinx, which ever kept
Such mien as if with open eyes it slept.

My eyelids sank in spite of wonder grown;
A louder crash upstartled me in dread—
The man had fallen forward, stone on stone,
And lay there shattered, with his trunkless head
Between the monster's large quiescent paws,
Beneath its grand front changeless as life's laws.

The moon had circled westward full and bright,
And made the temple-front a mystic dream,
And bathed the whole enclosure with its light,
The sworded angel's wrecks, the sphinx supreme.
I pondered long that cold majestic face
Whose vision seemed of infinite void space.

21

Anear the center of that northern crest
Stands out a level upland bleak and bare,
From which the city east and south and west
Sinks gently in long waves; and throned there
An Image sits, stupendous, superhuman,
The bronze colossus of a wingéd Woman,
Upon a graded granite base foursquare.

Low-seated she leans forward massively,
With cheek on clenched left hand, the forearm's might
Erect, its elbow on her rounded knee;
Across a clasped book in her lap the right
Upholds a pair of compasses; she gazes
With full set eyes, but wandering in thick mazes
Of somber thought beholds no outward sight.

Words cannot picture her; but all men know
That solemn sketch the pure sad artist wrought
Three centuries and threescore years ago,
With phantasies of his peculiar thought:
The instruments of carpentry and science
Scattered about her feet, in strange alliance
With the keen wolf-hound sleeping undistraught;

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1055. **sad artist,** Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), a famous German painter and engraver. His *Melancholia* is one of his most noted engravings.

Scales, hour-glass, bell, and magic-square above;
The grave and solid infant perched beside,
With open winglets that might bear a dove,
Intent upon its tablets, heavy-eyed;
Her folded wings as of a mighty eagle,
But all too impotent to lift the regal
Robustness of her earth-born strength and pride;

And with those wings, and that light wreath which seems
To mock her grand head and the knotted frown
Of forehead charged with baleful thoughts and dreams,
The household bunch of keys, the housewife's gown
Voluminous, indented, and yet rigid
As if a shell of burnished metal frigid,
The feet thick-shod to tread all weakness down;

The comet hanging o'er the waste dark seas,
The massy rainbow curved in front of it,
Beyond the village with the masts and trees;
The snaky imp, dog-headed, from the Pit,
Bearing upon its batlike leathern pinions
Her name unfolded in the sun's dominions,
The "Melencolia" that transcends all wit.

Thus has the artist copied her, and thus
Surrounded to expound her form sublime,
Her fate heroic and calamitous;
Fronting the dreadful mysteries of Time,
Unvanquished in defeat and desolation,
Undaunted in the hopeless conflagration
Of the day setting on her baffled prime.

Baffled and beaten back she works on still,
Weary and sick of soul she works the more,
Sustained by her indomitable will;
The hands shall fashion and the brain shall pore,
And all her sorrow shall be turned to labor,
Till Death, the friend-foe, piercing with his saber
That mighty heart of hearts, ends bitter war.

But as if blacker night could dawn on night,
With tenfold gloom on moonless night unstarred,
A sense more tragic than defeat and blight,
More desperate than strife with hope debarred,
More fatal than the adamantine Never
Encompassing her passionate endeavor,
Dawns glooming in her tenebrous regard —

The sense that every struggle brings defeat
Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;
That all the oracles are dumb or cheat
Because they have no secret to express;
That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain
Because there is no light beyond the curtain;
That all is vanity and nothingness.

Titanic from her high throne in the north,
That City's somber Patroness and Queen,
In bronze sublimity she gazes forth.
Over her Capital of teen and threne,
Over the river with its isles and bridges,
The marsh and moorland, to the stern rock-ridges,
Confronting them with a coëval mien.

The moving moon and stars from east to west
Circle before her in the sea of air;
Shadows and gleams glide round her solemn rest.
Her subjects often gaze up to her there:
The strong to drink new strength of iron endurance,
The weak new terrors; all, renewed assurance
And confirmation of the old despair.

*(1870-1874; 1874)*

## GEORGE MEREDITH (1828-1909)

### JUGGLING JERRY

Pitch here the tent, while the old horse grazes;
By the old hedge-side we'll halt a stage.
It's nigh my last above the daisies;
My next leaf'll be man's blank page.
Yes, my old girl! and it's no use crying;
Juggler, constable, king, must bow.
One that outjuggles all's been spying
Long to have me, and has me now.

We've traveled times to this old common;
Often we've hung our pots in the gorse.
We've had a stirring life, old woman!
You, and I, and the old gray horse.
Races, and fairs, and royal occasions,

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1061. **bell, and magic-square.** The bell, a symbol of faith, summons people to prayer. The magic-square, a symbol of equality, is a square diagram consisting of a number of small squares each containing a number. The numbers are so arranged that the sum of those in each of the various rows is the same.

1102. **tenebrous regard**, dusky look. 1113. **teen and threne**, sorrow and lamentation.

*Juggling Jerry.* 10. **gorse**, furze, a kind of spiny evergreen shrub.

Found us coming to their call;
Now they'll miss us at our stations —
There's a Juggler outjuggles all!

Up goes the lark, as if all were jolly!
Over the duck-pond the willow shakes;
It's easy to think that grieving's folly,
When the hand's firm as driven stakes!
Aye, when we're strong, and braced, and manful,
Life's a sweet fiddle, but we're a batch
Born to become the Great Juggler's han'ful:
Balls he shies up, and is safe to catch.

Here's where the lads of the village cricket—
I was a lad not wide from here;
Couldn't I juggle the bail off the wicket?
Like an old world those days appear!
Donkey, sheep, geese and thatched alehouse — I know them!
They are old friends of my halts, and seem,
Somehow, as if kind thanks I owe them;
Juggling don't hinder the heart's esteem.

Juggling's no sin, for we must have victual;
Nature allows us to bait for the fool.
Holding one's own makes us juggle no little;
But, to increase it, hard juggling's the rule.
You that are sneering at my profession,
Haven't you juggled a vast amount?
There's the Prime Minister, in one Session,
Juggles more games than my sins'll count.

I've murdered insects with mock thunder;
Conscience, for that, in men don't quail.
I've made bread from the bump of wonder;
That's my business, and there's my tale.
Fashion and rank all praised the professor;
Aye! and I've had my smile from the Queen —
Bravo, Jerry! she meant; God bless her!
Ain't this a sermon on that scene?

I've studied men from my topsy-turvy
Close, and, I reckon, rather true.
Some are fine fellows; some, right scurvy;
Most, a dash between the two.
But it's a woman, old girl, that makes me
Think more kindly of the race;
And it's a woman, old girl, that shakes me
When the Great Juggler I must face.

We two were married, due and legal;
Honest we've lived since we've been one.
Lord! I could then jump like an eagle;
You danced bright as a bit o' the sun.
Birds in a May-bush we were! right merry!
All night we kissed, we juggled all day.
Joy was the heart of Juggling Jerry!
Now from his old girl he's juggled away.

It's past parsons to console us;
No, nor no doctor fetch for me —
I can die without my bolus;
Two of a trade, lass, never agree!
Parson and Doctor — don't they love rarely,
Fighting the devil in other men's fields!
Stand up yourself and match him fairly;
Then see how the rascal yields!

I, lass, have lived no gypsy, flaunting
Finery while his poor helpmate grubs;
Coin I've stored, and you won't be wanting —
You shan't beg from the troughs and tubs.
Nobly you've stuck to me, though in his kitchen
Many a marquis would hail you cook!
Palaces you could have ruled and grown rich in,
But your old Jerry you never forsook.

Hand up the chirper! ripe ale winks in it;
Let's have comfort and be at peace,
Once a stout draft made me light as a linnet.
Cheer up! the Lord must have his lease.
May be — for none see in that black hollow —
It's just a place where we're held in pawn,
And, when the Great Juggler makes as to swallow,
It's just the sword-trick — I ain't quite gone.

Yonder came smells of the gorse, so nutty,
Gold-like and warm; it's the prime of May.
Better than mortar, brick, and putty,
Is God's house on a blowing day.
Lean me more up the mound; now I feel it;
All the old heath-smells! Ain't it strange?
There's the world laughing, as if to conceal it!
But He's by us, juggling the change.

I mind it well, by the sea-beach lying,
Once — it's long gone — when two gulls we beheld,
Which, as the moon got up, were flying
Down a big wave that sparked and swelled.
Crack went a gun: one fell; the second
Wheeled round him twice, and was off for new luck;
There in the dark her white wing beckoned—
Drop me a kiss — I'm the bird dead-struck!

(1859)

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25. **cricket**, play cricket. 27. **juggle . . . wicket**. In the game of cricket, when the batsman is not in place he may be put "out" if the wicket-keeper knocks off the bails (cross-pieces) with the ball. 49. **topsy-turvy**, varied points of view.

67. **bolus**, a large pill. 81. **chirper**, a cup that cheers. 95. **it**, the change from life to death.

## THE OLD CHARTIST

Whate'er I be, old England is my dam!
So there's my answer to the judges, clear.
I'm nothing of a fox, nor of a lamb;
I don't know how to cheat, nor how to leer;
I'm for the nation!
That's why you see me by the wayside here,
Returning home from transportation.

It's Summer in her bath this morn, I think.
I'm fresh as dew, and chirpy as the birds;
And just for joy to see old England wink
Through leaves again, I could harangue the herds;
Isn't it something
To speak out like a man when you've got words,
And prove you're not a stupid dumb thing?

They shipped me off for it; I'm here again.
Old England is my dam, whate'er I be.
Says I, I'll tramp it home, and see the grain —
If you see well, you're king of what you see;
Eyesight is having,
If you're not given, I said, to gluttony.
Such talk to ignorance sounds as raving.

You dear old brook, that from his Grace's park
Come bounding! on you run near my old town.
My lord can't lock the water; nor the lark,
Unless he kills him, can my lord keep down.
Up, is the song-note!
I've tried it, too — for comfort and renown,
I rather pitched upon the wrong note.

I'm not ashamed — not beaten's still my boast;
Again I'll rouse the people up to strike.
But home's where different politics jar most.
Respectability the women like.
This form, or that form —
The Government may be hungry pike,
But don't you mount a Chartist platform!

Well, well! Not beaten — spite of them, I shout;
And my estate is suffering for the cause. —
Now, what is yon brown water-rat about,
Who washes his old poll with busy paws?
What does he mean by 't?
It's like defying all our natural laws,
For him to hope he'll get clean by 't.

His seat is on a mud-bank, and his trade
Is dirt — he's quite contemptible; and yet
The fellow's all as anxious as a maid
To show a decent dress, and dry the wet.
Now it's his whisker,
And now his nose, and ear; he seems to get
Each moment at the motion brisker!

To see him squat like little chaps at school,
I could let fly a laugh with all my might.
He peers, hangs both his forepaws; bless that fool,
He's bobbing at his frill now! what a sight!
Licking the dish up,
As if he thought to pass from black to white,
Like parson into lawny bishop.

The elms and yellow reed-flags in the sun
Look on quite grave — the sunlight flecks his side;
And links of bindweed-flowers round him run,
And shine up doubled with him in the tide.
I'm nearly splitting,
But nature seems like seconding his pride,
And thinks that his behavior's fitting.

That isle o' mud looks baking dry with gold.
His needle-muzzle still works out and in.
It really is a wonder to behold,
And makes me feel the bristles of my chin.
Judged by appearance,
I fancy of the two I'm nearer sin,
And might as well commence a clearance.

And that's what my fine daughter said — she meant:
Pray hold your tongue, and wear a Sunday face.
Her husband, the young linendraper, spent
Much argument thereon — I'm their disgrace.
Bother the couple!
I feel superior to a chap whose place
Commands him to be neat and supple.

But if I go and say to my old hen,
I'll mend the gentry's boots, and keep discreet,
Until they grow too violent — why, then,
A warmer welcome I might chance to meet —
Warmer and better.
And if she fancies her old cock is beat,
And drops upon her knees — so let her!

She suffered for me — women, you'll observe,
Don't suffer for a Cause, but for a man.
When I was in the dock she showed her nerve:
I saw beneath her shawl my old tea-can
Trembling . . . she brought it

---

*The Old Chartist.* The Chartists were ardent political reformers of 1836-48 who aimed at relieving the social and industrial conditions of the working classes in England. They took their name from their official document, the *People's Charter*, which contained their complete platform. The document was drafted in the form of a charter or act of Parliament and was published in 1838.

To screw me for my work; she loathed my plan,
And therefore doubly kind I thought it.

I've never lost the taste of that same tea —
That liquor on my logic floats like oil,
When I state facts, and fellows disagree,
For human creatures all are in a coil;
All may want pardon.
I see a day when every pot will boil
Harmonious in one great tea-garden!

We wait the setting of the dandy's day,
Before that time! — He's furbishing his dress —
He will be ready for it! — and I say
That yon old dandy rat amid the cress —
Thanks to hard labor! —
If cleanliness is next to godliness,
The old fat fellow's heaven's neighbor!

You teach me a fine lesson, my old boy!
I've looked on my superiors far too long;
And small has been my profit as my joy.
You've done the right while I've denounced the wrong.
Prosper me later!
Like you I will despise the sniggering throng
And please myself and my Creator.

I'll bring the linendraper and his wife
Some day to see you — taking off my hat.
Should they ask why, I'll answer: in my life
I never found so true a democrat.
Base occupation
Can't rob you of your own esteem, old rat!
I'll preach you to the British nation. (1862)

## From *MODERN LOVE*

### 1

By this he knew she wept with waking eyes:
That, at his hand's light quiver by her head,
The strange low sobs that shook their common bed
Were called into her with a sharp surprise,
And strangled mute, like little gaping snakes,
Dreadfully venomous to him. She lay
Stone-still, and the long darkness flowed away
With muffled pulses. Then, as midnight makes
Her giant heart of Memory and Tears
Drink the pale drug of silence, and so beat
Sleep's heavy measure, they from head to feet
Were moveless, looking through their dead black years,
By vain regret scrawled over the blank wall.
Like sculptured effigies they might be seen
Upon their marriage-tomb, the sword between;
Each wishing for the sword that severs all.

### 13

"I play for Seasons, not Eternities!"
Says Nature, laughing on her way. "So must
All those whose stake is nothing more than dust!"
And lo, she wins, and of her harmonies
She is full sure! Upon her dying rose
She drops a look of fondness, and goes by,
Scarce any retrospection in her eye;
For she the laws of growth most deeply knows,
Whose hands bear, here, a seed-bag — there, an urn.
Pledged she herself to aught, 'twould mark her end!
This lesson of our only visible friend
Can we not teach our foolish hearts to learn?
Yes! yes! — but, oh, our human rose is fair
Surpassingly! Lose calmly Love's great bliss,
When the renewed forever of a kiss
Whirls life within the shower of loosened hair!

### 16

In our old shipwrecked days there was an hour,
When in the firelight steadily aglow,
Joined slackly, we beheld the red chasm grow
Among the clicking coals. Our library-bower
That eve was left to us; and hushed we sat
As lovers to whom Time is whispering.
From sudden-opened doors we heard them sing;
The nodding elders mixed good wine with chat.
Well knew we that Life's greatest treasure lay
With us, and of it was our talk. "Ah, yes!
Love dies!" I said (I never thought it less).
She yearned to me that sentence to unsay.
Then when the fire domed blackening, I found
Her cheek was salt against my kiss, and swift
Up the sharp scale of sobs her breast did lift. —
Now am I haunted by that taste! that sound!

### 17

At dinner, she is hostess, I am host.
Went the feast ever cheerfuller? She keeps
The Topic over intellectual deeps

---

104. **cleanliness . . . godliness.** This expression has been credited to John Wesley (1703-91), who used it in a sermon on dress.

*Modern Love.* This is a series of 16-line poems recording the thoughts and feelings of a husband and a wife ("he" and "she" of the poems) who loved each other once, but whose love has been dying. The husband sometimes speaks in his own person as "I."

*Poem 1.* 15. **the sword between.** The sword, as a symbol of honor, frequently functions in this way in the medieval romances. See *Of the Passing Away of Brynhild*, lines 141-143, page 644.

In buoyancy afloat. They see no ghost.
With sparkling surface-eyes we ply the ball;
It is in truth a most contagious game—
HIDING THE SKELETON shall be its name.
Such play as this the devils might appall!
But here's the greater wonder: in that we,
Enamored of an acting naught can tire,
Each other, like true hypocrites, admire;
Warm-lighted looks, Love's ephemeridæ,
Shoot gayly o'er the dishes and the wine.
We waken envy of our happy lot.
Fast, sweet, and golden, shows the marriage-knot.
Dear guests, you now have seen Love's corpse-light shine.

### 29

Am I failing? For no longer can I cast
A glory round about this head of gold.
Glory she wears, but springing from the mold;
Not like the consecration of the Past!
Is my soul beggared? Something more than earth
I cry for still; I cannot be at peace
In having Love upon a mortal lease.
I cannot take the woman at her worth!
Where is the ancient wealth wherewith I clothed
Our human nakedness, and could endow
With spiritual splendor a white brow
That else had grinned at me the fact I loathed?
A kiss is but a kiss now! and no wave
Of a great flood that whirls me to the sea.
But, as you will! we'll sit contentedly,
And eat our pot of honey on the grave.

### 43

Mark where the pressing wind shoots javelin-like
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-backed wave!
Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave—
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and strike,
And dart their hissing tongues high up the sand;
In hearing of the ocean, and in sight
Of those ribbed wind-streaks running into white.
If I the death of Love had deeply planned,
I never could have made it half so sure,
As by the unblest kisses which upbraid
The full-waked sense; or failing that, degrade!
'Tis morning; but no morning can restore
What we have forfeited. I see no sin;
The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot,
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot;
We are betrayed by what is false within.

### 44

They say that Pity in Love's service dwells,
A porter at the rosy temple's gate.
I missed him going—but it is my fate
To come upon him now beside his wells;
Whereby I know that I Love's temple leave,
And that the purple doors have closed behind.
Poor soul! if, in those early days unkind,
Thy power to sting had been but power to grieve,
We now might with an equal spirit meet,
And not be matched like innocence and vice.
She for the Temple's worship has paid price,
And takes the coin of Pity as a cheat.
She sees through simulation to the bone:
What's best in her impels her to the worst;
Never, she cries, shall Pity soothe Love's thirst,
Or foul hypocrisy for truth atone.

### 47

We saw the swallows gathering in the sky,
And in the osier-isle we heard them noise.
We had not to look back on summer joys,
Or forward to a summer of bright dye;
But in the largeness of the evening earth
Our spirits grew as we went side by side.
The hour became her husband and my bride.
Love, that had robbed us so, thus blessed our dearth!
The pilgrims of the year waxed very loud
In multitudinous chatterings, as the flood
Full brown came from the West, and like pale blood
Expanded to the upper crimson cloud.
Love, that had robbed us of immortal things,
This little moment mercifully gave,
Where I have seen across the twilight wave
The swan sail with her young beneath her wings.

### 48

Their sense is with their senses all mixed in,
Destroyed by subtleties these women are!
More brain, O Lord, more brain! or we shall mar
Utterly this fair garden we might win.
Behold! I looked for peace, and thought it near.
Our inmost hearts had opened, each to each.
We drank the pure daylight of honest speech.
Alas! that was the fatal draft, I fear.

---

*Poem 17.* 7. **Hiding the Skeleton.** They not only do not love each other, but each has another attraction—the wife, a man mentioned in *Number 3;* the husband, a lady with golden hair mentioned in *Number 13* and *Number 29.* 12. **ephemeridæ,** delicate insects that live only a few hours or days. 16. **corpse-light,** a luminous appearance, resembling the flame of a candle, sometimes seen in graveyards and damp places; it is thought to portend death.

*Poem 43.* 14. **wot,** knows.
*Poem 47.* 2. **osier-isle,** willow-isle.

For when of my lost Lady came the word,
This woman, O this agony of flesh!
Jealous devotion bade her break the mesh,
That I might seek that other like a bird.
I do adore the nobleness! despise
The act! She has gone forth, I know not where.
Will the hard world my sentience of her share?
I feel the truth; so let the world surmise.

### 50

Thus piteously Love closed what he begat:
The union of this ever-diverse pair!
These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
Condemned to do the flitting of the bat.
Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
They wandered once, clear as the dew on flowers.
But they fed not on the advancing hours;
Their hearts held cravings for the buried day.
Then each applied to each that fatal knife,
Deep questioning, which probes to endless dole.
Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life! —
In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!
(1862)

## DIRGE IN WOODS

A wind sways the pines,
And below
Not a breath of wild air —
Still as the mosses that glow
On the flooring and over the lines
Of the roots here and there.
The pine-tree drops its dead;
They are quiet, as under the sea.
Overhead, overhead
Rushes life in a race,
As the clouds the clouds chase;
And we go,
And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
Even we,
Even so.
(1870)

## A BALLAD OF PAST MERIDIAN

Last night returning from my twilight walk
I met the gray mist Death, whose eyeless brow
Was bent on me, and from his hand of chalk
He reached me flowers as from a withered bough.
O Death, what bitter nosegays givest thou!

Death said, "I gather," and pursued his way.
Another stood by me, a shape in stone,
Sword-hacked and iron-stained, with breasts of clay,
And metal veins that sometimes fiery shone.
O Life, how naked and how hard when known!

Life said, "As thou hast carved me, such am I."
Then Memory, like the nightjar on the pine,
And sightless Hope, a woodlark in night sky,
Joined notes of Death and Life till night's decline.
Of Death, of Life, those inwound notes are mine.
(1876)

## LOVE IN THE VALLEY

Under yonder beech-tree single on the greensward,
Couched with her arms behind her golden head,
Knees and tresses folded to slip and ripple idly,
Lies my young love sleeping in the shade.
Had I the heart to slide an arm beneath her,
Press her parting lips as her waist I gather slow,
Waking in amazement she could not but embrace me;
Then would she hold me and never let me go?

. . . . .

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swallow,
Swift as the swallow along the river's light
Circleting the surface to meet his mirrored winglets,
Fleeter she seems in her stay than in her flight.
Shy as the squirrel that leaps among the pine-tops,
Wayward as the swallow overhead at set of sun,
She whom I love is hard to catch and conquer,
Hard, but O the glory of the winning were she won!

When her mother tends her before the laughing mirror,
Tying up her laces, looping up her hair,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,

---

*Poem 48.* 9. **lost Lady.** See note on *Poem 17.* 10. **This woman,** his wife.
*A Ballad of Past Meridian.* Past meridian is afternoon.

12. **nightjar,** the European goatsucker, a night bird similar to the whippoorwill.

More love should I have, and much less care.
When her mother tends her before the lighted mirror,
Loosening her laces, combing down her curls,
Often she thinks, were this wild thing wedded,
I should miss but one for many boys and girls.

. . . . .

Heartless she is as the shadow in the meadows
Flying to the hills on a blue and breezy noon.
No, she is athirst and drinking up her wonder;
Earth to her is young as the slip of the new moon.
Deals she an unkindness, 'tis but her rapid measure,
Even as in a dance; and her smile can heal no less;
Like the swinging May-cloud that pelts the flowers with hailstones
Off a sunny border, she was made to bruise and bless.

Lovely are the curves of the white owl sweeping
Wavy in the dusk lit by one large star.
Lone on the fir-branch, his rattle-note unvaried,
Brooding o'er the gloom, spins the brown evejar.
Darker grows the valley, more and more forgetting;
So were it with me if forgetting could be willed.
Tell the grassy hollow that holds the bubbling well-spring,
Tell it to forget the source that keeps it filled.

. . . . .

Stepping down the hill with her fair companions,
Arm in arm, all against the raying West,
Boldly she sings, to the merry tune she marches,
Brave is her shape, and sweeter unpossessed.
Sweeter, for she is what my heart first awaking
Whispered the world was; morning light is she.
Love that so desires would fain keep her changeless;
Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free.

Happy, happy time, when the white star hovers
Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew,
Near the face of dawn, that draws athwart the darkness,
Threading it with color, like yewberries the yew.
Thicker crowd the shades as the grave East deepens
Glowing, and with crimson a long cloud swells.
Maiden still the morn is; and strange she is, and secret;
Strange her eyes; her cheeks are cold as cold sea-shells.

. . . . .

Sunrays, leaning on our southern hills and lighting
Wild cloud-mountains that drag the hills along,
Oft ends the day of your shifting brilliant laughter
Chill as a dull face frowning on a song.
Aye, but shows the Southwest a ripple-feathered bosom
Blown to silver while the clouds are shaken and ascend,
Scaling the mid-heavens as they stream—there comes a sunset
Rich, deep like love in beauty without end.

When at dawn she sighs, and like an infant to the window
Turns grave eyes craving light, released from dreams,
Beautiful she looks, like a white water-lily
Bursting out of bud in havens of the streams.
When from bed she rises clothed from neck to ankle
In her long nightgown sweet as boughs of May,
Beautiful she looks, like a tall garden lily
Pure from the night, and splendid for the day.

. . . . .

Mother of the dews, dark eye-lashed twilight,
Low-lidded twilight, o'er the valley's brim,
Rounding on thy breast sings the dew-delighted skylark,
Clear as though the dewdrops had their voice in him.
Hidden where the rose-flush drinks the rayless planet,
Fountain-full he pours the spraying fountain-showers.

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36. **evejar**, nightjar (see note on line 12, page 595).

77. **rayless planet**, the morning star bereft of it rays by the dawn.

Let me hear her laughter, I would have her ever
Cool as dew in twilight, the lark above the flowers.

All the girls are out with their baskets for the primrose;
Up lanes, woods through, they troop in joyful bands.
My sweet leads; she knows not why, but now she loiters,
Eyes the bent anemones, and hangs her hands.
Such a look will tell that the violets are peeping,
Coming the rose; and unaware a cry
Springs in her bosom for odors and for color,
Covert and the nightingale — she knows not why.

. . . . .

Kerchiefed head and chin she darts between her tulips,
Streaming like a willow gray in arrowy rain.
Some bend beaten cheek to gravel, and their angel
She will be; she lifts them, and on she speeds again.
Black the driving raincloud breasts the iron gateway;
She is forth to cheer a neighbor lacking mirth.
So when sky and grass met rolling dumb for thunder
Saw I once a white dove, sole light of earth.

Prim little scholars are the flowers of her garden,
Trained to stand in rows, and asking if they please.
I might love them well but for loving more the wild ones —
O my wild ones! they tell me more than these.
You, my wild one, you tell of honeyed field-rose,
Violet, blushing eglantine in life; and even as they,
They by the wayside are earnest of your goodness,
You are of life's, on the banks that line the way.

. . . . .

Peering at her chamber the white crowns the red rose,
Jasmine winds the porch with stars two and three.
Parted is the window; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Breathes a falling breath that carries thoughts of me.
Sweeter unpossessed, have I said of her my sweetest?
Not while she sleeps — while she sleeps the jasmine breathes,
Luring her to love; she sleeps; the starry jasmine
Bears me to her pillow under white rose-wreaths.

Yellow with birdfoot-trefoil are the grass-glades;
Yellow with cinquefoil of the dew-gray leaf;
Yellow with stonecrop; the moss-mounds are yellow;
Blue-necked the wheat sways, yellowing to the sheaf.
Green-yellow bursts from the copse the laughing yaffle;
Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade and shine.
Earth in her heart laughs looking at the heavens,
Thinking of the harvest: I look and think of mine.

. . . . .

This I may know: her dressing and undressing
Such a change of light shows as when the skies in sport
Shift from cloud to moonlight; or edging over thunder
Slips a ray of sun; or sweeping into port
White sails furl; or on the ocean borders
White sails lean along the waves leaping green.
Visions of her shower before me, but from eyesight
Guarded she would be like the sun were she seen.

Front door and back of the mossed old farmhouse
Open with the morn; and in a breezy link
Freshly sparkles garden to stripe-shadowed orchard,
Green across a rill where on sand the minnows wink.
Busy in the grass the early sun of summer
Swarms, and the blackbird's mellow fluting notes

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113. **birdfoot-trefoil**, a three-lobed flower or leaf resembling the foot of a bird. 114. **cinquefoil**, a plant having leaves with five leaflets. 117. **yaffle**, the green woodpecker. 130. **link**, a part of a winding stream and its adjacent land.

Call my darling up with round and roguish challenge—
Quaintest, richest carol of all the singing throats!

. . . . .

Cool was the woodside; cool as her white dairy
Keeping sweet the cream-pan; and there the boys from school,
Cricketing below, rushed brown and red with sunshine;
O the dark translucence of the deep-eyed cool!
Spying from the farm, herself she fetched a pitcher
Full of milk, and tilted for each in turn the beak.
Then a little fellow, mouth up and on tiptoe,
Said, "I will kiss you"; she laughed and leaned her cheek.

Doves of the fir-wood walling high our red roof
Through the long noon coo, crooning through the coo.
Loose droop the leaves, and down the sleepy roadway
Sometimes pipes a chaffinch; loose droops the blue.
Cows flap a slow tail knee-deep in the river,
Breathless, given up to sun and gnat and fly.
Nowhere is she seen; and if I see her nowhere,
Lightning may come, straight rains and tiger sky.

. . . . .

O the golden sheaf, the rustling treasure-armful!
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced!
O the treasure-tresses one another over
Nodding! O the girdle slack about the waist!
Slain are the poppies that shot their random scarlet
Quick amid the wheatears; wound about the waist,
Gathered, see these brides of Earth one blush of ripeness!
O the nutbrown tresses nodding interlaced!

Large and smoky red the sun's cold disk drops,
Clipped by naked hills, on violet shaded snow;
Eastward large and still lights up a bower of moonrise,
Whence at her leisure steps the moon aglow.
Nightlong on black print-branches our beech-tree
Gazes in this whiteness; nightlong could I.
Here may life on death or death on life be painted.
Let me clasp her soul to know she cannot die!

. . . . .

Gossips count her faults; they scour a narrow chamber
Where there is no window, read not heaven or her.
"When she was a tiny," one aged woman quavers,
Plucks at my heart and leads me by the ear.
Faults she had once as she learned to run and tumbled;
Faults of feature some see, beauty not complete.
Yet, good gossips, beauty that makes holy
Earth and air, may have faults from head to feet.

Hither she comes; she comes to me; she lingers,
Deepens her brown eyebrows, while in new surprise
High rise the lashes in wonder of a stranger;
Yet am I the light and living of her eyes.
Something friends have told her fills her heart to brimming,
Nets her in her blushes, and wounds her, and tames.—
Sure of her haven, O like a dove alighting,
Arms up, she dropped; our souls were in our names.

. . . . .

Soon will she lie like a white-frost sunrise.
Yellow oats and brown wheat, barley pale as rye,
Long since your sheaves have yielded to the thresher,
Felt the girdle loosened, seen the tresses fly.
Soon will she lie like a blood-red sunset.
Swift with the tomorrow, green-winged Spring!
Sing from the Southwest, bring her back the truants,
Nightingale and swallow, song and dipping wing.

Soft new beech-leaves, up to beamy April
Spreading bough on bough a primrose mountain, you

---

165. **print-branches**, shadows of the branches of the beech-tree.

Lucid in the moon, raise lilies to the sky-fields,
Youngest green transfused in silver shining through —
Fairer than the lily, than the wild white cherry;
Fair as in image my seraph love appears
Borne to me by dreams when dawn is at my eyelids;
Fair as in the flesh she swims to me on tears.

. . . . .

Could I find a place to be alone with heaven,
I would speak my heart out; heaven is my need.
Every woodland tree is flushing like the dogwood,
Flashing like the whitebeam, swaying like the reed —
Flushing like the dogwood crimson in October;
Streaming like the flag-reed Southwest blown;
Flashing as in gusts the sudden-lighted whitebeam.
All seem to know what is for heaven alone.
(1851; 1878)

## THE LARK ASCENDING

He rises and begins to round;
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur, and shake —
All intervolved and spreading wide,
Like water-dimples down a tide
Where ripple ripple overcurls
And eddy into eddy whirls;
A press of hurried notes that run
So fleet they scarce are more than one,
Yet changingly the trills repeat
And linger ringing while they fleet —
Sweet to the quick o' the ear, and dear
To her beyond the handmaid ear,
Who sits beside our inner springs,
Too often dry for this he brings,
Which seems the very jet of earth
At sight of sun, her music's mirth,
As up he wings the spiral stair,
A song of light, and pierces air
With fountain ardor, fountain play,
To reach the shining tops of day,
And drink in everything discerned,
An ecstasy to music turned —
Impelled by what his happy bill
Disperses; drinking, showering still,
Unthinking save that he may give
His voice the outlet, there to live
Renewed in endless notes of glee,
So thirsty of his voice is he,
For all to hear and all to know
That he is joy, awake, aglow —
The tumult of the heart to hear
Through pureness filtered crystal-clear —
And know the pleasure sprinkled bright
By simple singing of delight,
Shrill, irreflective, unrestrained,
Rapt, ringing, on the jet sustained
Without a break, without a fall,
Sweet-silvery, sheer lyrical,
Perennial, quavering up the chord
Like myriad dews of sunny sward
That trembling into fullness shine,
And sparkle dropping argentine;
Such wooing as the ear receives
From zephyr caught in choric leaves
Of aspens when their chattering net
Is flushed to white with shivers wet;
And such the water-spirit's chime
On mountain heights in mornings prime,
Too freshly sweet to seem excess,
Too animate to need a stress;
But wider over many heads
The starry voice ascending spreads,
Awakening, as it waxes thin,
The best in us to him akin;
And every face to watch him raised
Puts on the light of children praised —
So rich our human pleasure ripes
When sweetness on sincereness pipes,
Though naught be promised from the seas —
But only a soft-ruffling breeze
Sweep glittering on a still content,
Serenity in ravishment.

For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instills,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup,
And he the wine which overflows
To lift us with him as he goes —
But not from earth is he divorced,
He joyfully to fly enforced.
The woods and brooks, the sheep and kine,
He is, the hills, the human line,
The meadows green, the fallows brown,
The dreams of labor in the town;
He sings the sap, the quickened veins;
The wedding song of sun and rains
He is, the dance of children, thanks
Of sowers, shout of primrose-banks,
And eye of violets while they breathe;
All these the circling song will wreathe,
And you shall hear the herb and tree,

---

204. **whitebeam,** a small tree with leaves white on the underside.

*The Lark Ascending.* 14. **her,** the spirit of earth or nature within us.

44. **argentine,** silver-like substance.

The better heart of men shall see,
Shall feel celestially — as long
As you crave nothing save the song.

Was never voice of ours could say
Our inmost in the sweetest way,
Like yonder voice aloft, and link
All hearers in the song they drink.
Our wisdom speaks from failing blood,
Our passion is too full in flood;
We want the key of his wild note
Of truthful in a tuneful throat,
The song seraphically free
Of taint of personality —
So pure that it salutes the suns,
The voice of one for millions,
In whom the millions rejoice
For giving their one spirit voice.

Yet men have we, whom we revere,
Now names — and men still housing here —
Whose lives, by many a battle-dint
Defaced, and grinding wheels on flint,
Yield substance, though they sing not, sweet
For song our highest heaven to greet;
Whom heavenly singing gives us new,
Enspheres them brilliant in our blue,
From firmest base to farthest leap,
Because their love of Earth is deep,
And they are warriors in accord
With life to serve, and pass reward —
So touching purest and so heard
In the brain's reflex of yon bird.
Wherefore their soul in me — or mine,
Through self-forgetfulness divine,
In them — that song aloft maintains,
To fill the sky and thrill the plains
With showerings drawn from human stores,
As he to silence nearer soars,
Extends the world at wings and dome,
More spacious making more our home,
Till lost on his aërial rings
In light — and then the fancy sings.

(*1881;* 1881)

## LUCIFER IN STARLIGHT

On a starred night Prince Lucifer uprose.
Tired of his dark dominion, swung the fiend
Above the rolling ball, in cloud part screened,
Where sinners hugged their specter of repose.
Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
And now upon his western wing he leaned,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

(1883)

## SENSE AND SPIRIT

The senses loving Earth or well or ill,
Ravel yet more the riddle of our lot.
The mind is in their trammels, and lights not
By trimming fear-bred tales; nor does the will
To find in nature things which less may chill
An ardor that desires, unknowing what.
Till we conceive her living we go distraught,
At best but circle-windsails of a mill.
Seeing she lives, and of her joy of life
Creatively has given us blood and breath
For endless war and never wound unhealed,
The gloomy Wherefore of our battlefield
Solves in the Spirit, wrought of her through strife
To read her own and trust her down to death.

(1883)

## THE SPIRIT OF SHAKESPEARE

Thy greatest knew thee, Mother Earth; unsoured
He knew thy sons. He probed from hell to hell
Of human passions, but of love deflowered
His wisdom was not, for he knew thee well.
Thence came the honeyed corner at his lips,
The conquering smile wherein his spirit sails
Calm as the god who the white sea-wave whips,
Yet full of speech and intershifting tales,
Close mirrors of us. Thence had he the laugh
We feel is thine — broad as ten thousand beeves
At pasture! Thence thy songs, that winnow chaff
From grain, bid sick Philosophy's last leaves
Whirl, if they have no response — they enforced
To fatten Earth when from her soul divorced.

---

96. **taint of personality**, egotism. 112. **pass**, do without. 114. **brain's reflex**, mind's reflection or interpretation. 122. **More . . . home**, extending our habitat.

*Lucifer in Starlight.* 2. **his dark dominion**, hell. 9. **scars**, those received in his battle with the angels and in his fall through the regions of air with the rebel hosts.

*Sense and Spirit.* 4. **nor does the will.** The will does not give us our true relation with Nature any more than do the senses.

*The Spirit of Shakespeare.* 7. **the god**, Neptune, god of the sea.

## THE SPIRIT OF SHAKESPEARE
*(Continued)*

How smiles he at a generation ranked
In gloomy noddings over life! They pass.
Not he to feed upon a breast unthanked,
Or eye a beauteous face in a cracked glass.
But he can spy that little twist of brain
Which moved some weighty leader of the blind—
Unwitting 'twas the goad of personal pain—
To view in curst eclipse our Mother's mind,
And show us of some rigid harridan
The wretched bondmen till the end of time.
O lived the Master now to paint us Man,
That little twist of brain would ring a chime
Of whence it came and what it caused, to start
Thunders of laughter, clearing air and heart.

(1883)

## EARTH'S SECRET

Not solitarily in fields we find
Earth's secret open, though one page is there—
Her plainest, such as children spell, and share
With bird and beast—raised letters for the blind.
Not where the troubled passions toss the mind,
In turbid cities, can the key be bare.
It hangs for those who hither thither fare,
Close interthreading nature with our kind.
They, hearing History speak, of what men were,
And have become, are wise. The gain is great
In vision and solidity; it lives.
Yet at a thought of life apart from her,
Solidity and vision lose their state,
For Earth, that gives the milk, the spirit gives.

(1883)

## MELAMPUS

With love exceeding a simple love of the things
That glide in grasses and rubble of woody wreck;
Or change their perch on a beat of quivering wings
From branch to branch, only restful to pipe and peck;
Or, bristled, curl at a touch their snouts in a ball;
Or cast their web between bramble and thorny hook—
The good physician Melampus, loving them all,
Among them walked, as a scholar who reads a book.

For him the woods were a home and gave him the key
Of knowledge, thirst for their treasures in herbs and flowers,
The secrets held by the creatures nearer than we
To earth he sought, and the link of their life with ours:
And where alike we are, unlike where, and the veined
Division, veined parallel, of a blood that flows
In them, in us, from the source by man unattained
Save marks he well what the mystical woods disclose.

And this he deemed might be boon of love to a breast
Embracing tenderly each little motive shape,
The prone, the flitting, who seek their food whither best
Their wits direct, whither best from their foes escape;
For closer drawn to our mother's natural milk,
As babes they learn where her motherly help is great:
They know the juice for the honey, juice for the silk,
And, need they medical antidotes, find them straight.

Of earth and sun they are wise, they nourish their broods,
Weave, build, hive, burrow, and battle, take joy and pain
Like swimmers varying billows. Never in woods
Runs white insanity fleeing itself; all sane
The woods revolve: as the tree its shadowing limns
To some resemblance in motion, the rooted life
Restrains disorder; you hear the primitive hymns
Of earth in woods issue wild of the web of strife.

---

*The Spirit of Shakespeare—Continued.* 3-4. **Not he . . . glass.** He is not the one to receive benefits ungratefully from the world, or to present a distorted view of humankind.

*Melampus.* In Greek mythology Melampus was a physician who obtained the power of understanding the language of birds and other animals after his ears had been licked by some young serpents which he had saved from death.

29. **limns,** delineates.

Now sleeping once on a day of marvelous fire,
A brood of snakes he has cherished in grave regret
That death his people had dealt their dam and their sire,
Through savage dread of them, crept to his neck, and set
Their tongues to lick him. The swift affectionate tongue
Of each ran licking the slumberer; then his ears
A forked red tongue tickled shrewdly; sudden upsprung,
He heard a voice piping: Aye, for he has no fears!

A bird said that, in the notes of birds, and the speech
Of men, it seemed; and another renewed: He moves
To learn and not to pursue, he gathers to teach;
He feeds his young as do we, and as we love loves.
No fears have I of a man who goes with his head
To earth, chance looking aloft at us, kind of hand.
I feel to him as to earth of whom we are fed;
I pipe him much for his good could he understand.

Melampus touched at his ears, laid finger on wrist;
He was not dreaming, he sensibly felt and heard.
Above, through leaves, where the tree-twigs thick intertwist,
He spied the birds and the bill of the speaking bird.
His cushion mosses in shades of various green,
The lumped, the antlered, he pressed, while the sunny snake
Slipped under; drafts he had drunk of clear Hippocrene,
It seemed, and sat with a gift of the gods awake.

Divinely thrilled was the man, exultingly full,
As quick well-waters that come of the heart of earth,
Ere yet they dart in a brook are one bubble-pool
To light and sound, wedding both at the leap of birth.
The soul of light vivid shone, a stream within stream;
The soul of sound from a musical shell outflew;
Where others hear but a hum and see but a beam,
The tongue and eye of the fountain of life he knew.

He knew the Hours: they were round him, laden with seed
Of hours bestrewn upon vapor, and one by one
They winged as ripened in fruit the burden decreed
For each to scatter; they flushed like the buds in sun,
Bequeathing seed to successive similar rings,
Their sisters, bearers to men of what men have earned.
He knew them, talked with the yet unreddened; the stings,
The sweets, they warmed at their bosoms divined, discerned.

Not unsolicited, sought by diligent feet,
By riddling fingers expanded, oft watched in growth
With brooding deep as the noon-ray's quickening wheat,
Ere touched, the pendulous flower of the plants of sloth,
The plants of rigidness, answered question and squeeze,
Revealing wherefore it bloomed uninviting, bent,
Yet making harmony breathe of life and disease,
The deeper chord of a wonderful instrument.

So passed he luminous-eyed for earth and the fates
We arm to bruise or caress us; his ears were charged
With tones of love in a whirl of voluble hates,
With music wrought of distraction his ear enlarged.
Celestial-shining, though mortal, singer, though mute,
He drew the Master of harmonies, voiced or stilled,
To seek him; heard at the silent medicine-root
A song, beheld in fulfillment the unfulfilled.

Him Phœbus, lending to darkness color and form
Of light's excess, many lessons and counsels gave;

---

55. **Hippocrene**, a fountain on Mt. Helicon, in Bœotia, Greece. Its waters were supposed to impart poetic inspiration.

65. **Hours**, the Horæ (Hours), goddesses of the seasons and of day and night. 86. **Master of harmonies**, Phœbus Apollo, god of music, of poetry, and of the sun.

Showed Wisdom lord of the human intricate swarm,
And whence prophetic it looks on the hives that rave,
And how acquired, of the zeal of love to acquire,
And where it stands, in the center of life a sphere;
And Measure, mood of the lyre, the rapturous lyre,
He said was Wisdom, and struck him the notes to hear.

Sweet, sweet: 'twas glory of vision, honey, the breeze
In heat, the run of the river on root and stone,
All senses joined, as the sister Pierides
Are one, uplifting their chorus, the Nine, his own.
In stately order, evolved of sound into sight,
From sight to sound intershifting, the man descried
The growths of earth, his adored, like day out of night,
Ascend in song, seeing nature and song allied.

And there vitality, there, there solely in song,
Resides, where earth and her uses to men, their needs,
Their forceful cravings, the theme are: there is it strong,
The Master said: and the studious eye that reads
(Yea, even as earth to the crown of gods on the mount),
In links divine with the lyrical tongue is bound.
Pursue thy craft: it is music drawn of a fount
To spring perennial; well-spring is common ground.

Melampus dwelt among men: physician and sage,
He served them, loving them, healing them; sick or maimed
Or them that frenzied in some delirious rage
Outran the measure, his juice of the woods reclaimed.
He played on men, as his master, Phœbus, on strings
Melodious; as the god did he drive and check,
Through love exceeding a simple love of the things
That glide in grasses and rubble of woody wreck.
(1883)

## ON THE DANGER OF WAR

Avert, High Wisdom, never vainly wooed,
This threat of War, that shows a land brain-sick.
When nations gain the pitch where rhetoric
Seems reason they are ripe for cannon's food.
Dark looms the issue though the cause be good,
But with the doubt 'tis our old devil's trick.
O now the down-slope of the lunatic
Illumine lest we redden of that brood.
For not since man in his first view of thee
Ascended to the heavens giving sign
Within him of deep sky and sounded sea,
Did he unforfeiting thy laws transgress;
In peril of his blood his ears incline
To drums whose loudness is their emptiness.
(1885)

## HARD WEATHER

Bursts from a rending East in flaws
The young green leaflet's harrier, sworn
To strew the garden, strip the shaws,
And show our spring with banner torn.
Was ever such virago morn?
The wind has teeth, the wind has claws.
All the wind's wolves through woods are loose,
The wild wind's falconry aloft.
Shrill underfoot the grassblade shrews,
At gallop, clumped, and down the croft
Bestrid by shadows, beaten, tossed;
It seems a scythe, it seems a rod.
The howl is up at the howl's accost;
The shivers greet and the shivers nod.

Is the land ship? we are rolled, we drive
Tritonly, cleaving hiss and hum;
Whirl with the dead, or mount or dive,
Or down in dregs, or on in scum.
And drums the distant, pipes the near,
And vale and hill are gray in gray,
As when the surge is crumbling sheer,
And sea-mews wing the haze of spray.
Clouds — are they bony witches? — swarms,
Darting swift on the robber's flight,
Hurry an infant sky in arms:
It peeps, it becks; 'tis day, 'tis night.
Black while over the loop of blue
The swathe is closed, like shroud on corse.
Lo, as if swift the Furies flew,
The Fates at hell at a cry to horse!

Interpret me the savage whirr:
And is it Nature scourged, or she,

---

99. **Pierides**, the Nine Muses, the chorus of Phœbus Apollo. They were born in Pieria, Thessaly.

*Hard Weather.* 3. **shaws**, woods. 9. **shrews**, curses. 10. **croft**, pasture. 16. **Tritonly**, like Triton, a god of the sea who raised or calmed the waves by blowing upon his trumpet. 24. **the . . . flight**, the sweep of the wind. 29. **Furies**, three avenging deities, attendants of Proserpina, queen of Hades. 30. **Fates**, three goddesses whose office it was to spin the thread of human destiny.

Her offspring's executioner,
Reducing land to barren sea?
But is there meaning in a day
When this fierce angel of the air,
Intent to throw, and haply slay,
Can, for what breath of life we bear
Exact the wrestle? Call to mind
The many meanings glistening up
When Nature to her nurslings kind,
Hands them the fruitage and the cup!
And seek we rich significance
Not otherwhere than with those tides
Of pleasure on the sunned expanse,
Whose flow deludes, whose ebb derides?

Look in the face of men who fare
Lock-mouthed, a match in lungs and thews
For this fierce angel of the air,
To twist with him and take his bruise.
That is the face beloved of old
Of Earth, young mother of her brood.
Nor broken for us shows the mold
When muscle is in mind renewed:
Though farther from her nature rude,
Yet nearer to her spirit's hold;
And though of gentler mood serene,
Still forceful of her fountain-jet.
So shall her blows be shrewdly met,
Be luminously read the scene
Where Life is at her grindstone set,
That she may give us edging keen,
String us for battle, till as play
The common strokes of fortune shower.
Such meaning in a dagger-day
Our wits may clasp to wax in power —
Yea, feel us warmer at her breast,
By spin of blood in lusty drill,
Than when her honeyed hands caressed,
And Pleasure, sapping, seemed to fill.

Behold the life at ease; it drifts.
The sharpened life commands its course.
She winnows, winnows roughly; sifts,
To dip her chosen in her source.
Contention is the vital force,
Whence pluck they brain, her prize of gifts,
Sky of the senses! on which height,
Not disconnected, yet released,
They see how spirit comes to light,
Through conquest of the inner beast,
Which Measure tames to movement sane,
In harmony with what is fair.
Never is Earth misread by brain:
That is the welling of her, there
The mirror — with one step beyond,
For likewise is it voice; and more:
Benignest kinship bids respond,
When wail the weak, and then restore
Whom days as fell as this may rive,
While Earth sits ebon in her gloom,
Us atomies of life alive
Unheeding, bent on life to come.
Her children of the laboring brain,
These are the champions of the race,
True parents, and the sole humane,
With understanding for their base.
Earth yields the milk, but all her mind
Is vowed to thresh for stouter stock.
Her passion for old giantkind,
That scaled the mount, uphurled the rock,
Devolves on them who read aright
Her meaning and devoutly serve;
Nor in her starlessness of night
Peruse her with the craven nerve:
But even as she from grass to corn,
To eagle high from grubbing mole,
Prove in strong brain her noblest born,
The station for the flight of soul. (1888)

## OUTER AND INNER

From twig to twig the spider weaves
  At noon his webbing fine.
So near to mute the zephyrs flute
  That only leaflets dance.
The sun draws out of hazel leaves
  A smell of woodland wine.
I wake a swarm to sudden storm
  At any step's advance.

Along my path is bugloss blue,
  The star with fruit in moss;
The foxgloves drop from throat to top
  A daily lesser bell.
The blackest shadow, nurse of dew,
  Has orange skeins across;
And keenly red is one thin thread
  That flashing seems to swell.

My world I note ere fancy comes,
  Minutest hushed observe:
What busy bits of motioned wits
  Through antlered mosswork strive.
But now so low the stillness hums,
  My springs of seeing swerve,
For half a wink to thrill and think
  The woods with nymphs alive.

I neighbor the invisible
  So close that my consent
Is only asked for spirits masked

---

63. **String us,** nerve us. 68. **drill,** stream. 84-85. **welling . . . mirror,** the human mind constitutes a world—and then reflects its own creation.

99. **giantkind.** The Giants were a mythological race of monsters who were thought to have pushed up the mountains. 105. **corn,** grain, wheat. With lines 105-108 compare *In Memoriam,* Section 118, page 87.

*Outer and Inner.* 9. **bugloss,** a plant commonly called oxtongue.

To leap from trees and flowers.
And this because with them I dwell
In thought, while calmly bent
To read the lines dear Earth designs
Shall speak her life on ours.

Accept, she says; it is not hard
In woods; but she in towns
Repeats, accept; and have we wept,
And have we quailed with fears,
Or shrunk with horrors, sure reward
We have whom knowledge crowns;
Who see in mold the rose unfold,
The soul through blood and tears.
(1888)

## NATURE AND LIFE

Leave the uproar! At a leap
Thou shalt strike a woodland path,
Enter silence, not of sleep,
Under shadows, not of wrath;
Breath which is the spirit's bath,
In the old Beginnings find,
And endow them with a mind,
Seed for seedling, swathe for swathe.
That gives Nature to us, this
Give we her, and so we kiss.

Fruitful is it so — but hear
How within the shell thou art,
Music sounds; nor other near
Can to such a tremor start.
Of the waves our life is part;
They our running harvests bear —
Back to them for manful air,
Laden with the woodland's heart!
That gives Battle to us, this
Give we it, and good the kiss. (1888)

## HYMN TO COLOR

With Life and Death I walked when Love appeared,
And made them on each side a shadow seem.
Through wooded vales the land of dawn we neared,
Where down smooth rapids whirls the helmless dream
To fall on daylight, and night puts away
Her darker veil for gray.

In that gray veil green grassblades brushed we by;
We came where woods breathed, sharp, and overhead
Rocks raised clear horns on a transforming sky.
Around, save for those shapes, with him who led
And linked them, desert varied by no sign
Of other life than mine.

By this the dark-winged planet, raying wide,
From the mild pearl-glow to the rose upborne,
Drew in his fires, less faint than far descried,
Pure-fronted on a stronger wave of morn;
And those two shapes the splendor interweaved
Hung web-like, sank, and heaved.

Love took my hand when hidden stood the sun
To fling his robe on shoulder-heights of snow;
Then said: There lie they, Life and Death in one.
Whichever is, the other is; but know,
It is thy craving self that thou dost see,
Not in them seeing me.

Shall man into the mystery of breath
From his quick beating pulse a pathway spy?
Or learn the secret of the shrouded death,
By lifting up the lid of a white eye?
Cleave thou thy way with fathering desire
Of fire to reach to fire.

Look now where Color, the soul's bridegroom, makes
The house of heaven splendid for the bride.
To him as leaps a fountain she awakes,
In knotting arms, yet boundless; him beside,
She holds the flower to heaven, and by his power
Brings heaven to the flower.

He gives her homeliness in desert air,
And sovereignty in spaciousness; he leads
Through widening chambers of surprise to where
Throbs rapture near an end that aye recedes,
Because his touch is infinite and lends
A yonder to all ends.

Death begs of Life his blush; Life Death persuades
To keep long day with his caresses graced.
He is the heart of light, the wing of shades,
The crown of beauty. Never soul embraced
Of him can harbor unfaith; soul of him
Possessed walks never dim.

---

*Hymn to Color.* In this poem Light, Darkness, and Color symbolize respectively Life, Death, and Love.

13. **dark-winged planet,** the morning star. 17. **two shapes,** Life and Death, of line 1. Supply *that* after *shapes.* 43-45. **Death . . . shades.** Under the influence of Love (Color, line 31), Death becomes less hideous and Life seems prolonged. Love (He, of line 45) causes shades, or shadows, to depart.

Love eyed his rosy memories; he sang:
O bloom of dawn, breathed up from the gold sheaf
Held springing beneath Orient! that dost hang
The space of dewdrops running over leaf;
Thy fleetingness is bigger in the ghost
Than Time with all his host!

Of thee to say behold, has said adieu —
But love remembers how the sky was green,
And how the grasses glimmered lightest blue;
How saint-like gray took fervor; how the screen
Of cloud grew violet; how thy moment came
Between a blush and flame.

Love saw the emissary eglantine
Break wave round thy white feet above the gloom;
Lay finger on thy star; thy raiment line
With cherub wing and limb; wed thy soft bloom,
Gold-quivering like sunrays in thistledown,
Earth under rolling brown.

They do not look through love to look on thee,
Great heavenliness! nor know they joy of sight,
Who deem the wave of rapt desire must be
Its wrecking and last issue of delight.
Dead seasons quicken in one petal-spot
Of color unforgot.

This way have men come out of brutishness
To spell the letters of the sky and read
A reflex upon earth else meaningless.
With thee, O fount of the Untimed! to lead,
Drink they of thee, thee eyeing, they unaged
Shall on through brave wars waged.

More gardens will they win than any lost —
The vile plucked out of them, the unlovely slain;
Not forfeiting the beast with which they are crossed,
To stature of the gods will they attain.
They shall uplift their Earth to meet her Lord,
Themselves the attuning chord!

The song had ceased, my vision with the song.
Then of those Shadows, which one made descent
Beside me I knew not. But Life ere long
Came on me in the public ways and bent
Eyes deeper than of old; Death met I too,
And saw the dawn glow through.

(1888)

## MEDITATION UNDER STARS

What links are ours with orbs that are
So resolutely far? —
The solitary asks, and they
Give radiance as from a shield:
Still at the death of day,
The seen, the unrevealed.
Implacable they shine
To us who would of Life obtain
An answer for the life we strain,
To nourish with one sign.
Nor can imagination throw
The penetrative shaft: we pass
The breath of thought, who would divine
If haply they may grow
As Earth; have our desire to know;
If life comes there to grain from grass,
And flowers like ours of toil and pain;
Has passion to beat bar,
Win space from cleaving brain;
The mystic link attain,
Whereby star holds on star.

Those visible immortals beam
Allurement to the dream:
Ireful at human hungers brook
No question in the look.
Forever virgin to our sense,
Remote they wane to gaze intense:
Prolong it, and in ruthlessness they smite
The beating heart behind the ball of sight:
Till we conceive their heavens hoar,
Those lights they raise but sparkles frore,
And Earth, our blood-warm Earth, a shuddering prey
To that frigidity of brainless ray.
Yet space is given for breath of thought
Beyond our bounds when musing: more
When to that musing love is brought,
And love is asked of love's wherefore.
'Tis Earth's, her gift; else have we naught:
Her gift, her secret, here our tie.
And not with her and yonder sky?
Bethink you: were it Earth alone
Breeds love, would not her region be
The sole delight and throne
Of generous Deity?

To deeper than this ball of sight
Appeal the lustrous people of the night.
Fronting yon shoreless, sown with fiery sails,
It is our ravenous that quails,
Flesh by its craven thirsts and fears distraught.
The spirit leaps alight,
Doubts not in them is he,

---

31. **frore**, frozen. 48. **our ravenous**, the ravenous part of us; egoism.

The binder of his sheaves, the same, the right:
Of magnitude is wrought,
To feel it large of the great life they hold:
In them to come, or vaster intervolved,
The issues known in us, our unsolved solved:
That there with toil Life climbs the selfsame Tree,
Whose roots enrichment have from ripeness dropped.

So may we read and little find them cold:
Let it but be the lord of Mind to guide
Our eyes; no branch of Reason's growing lopped;
Nor dreaming on a dream; but fortified
By day to penetrate black midnight; see,
Hear, feel, outside the senses; even that we,
The specks of dust upon a mound of mold,
We who reflect those rays, though low our place,
To them are lastingly allied.

So may we read, and little find them cold:
Not frosty lamps illuming dead space,
Not distant aliens, not senseless Powers.
The fire is in them whereof we are born;
The music of their motion may be ours.
Spirit shall deem them beckoning Earth and voiced
Sisterly to her, in her beams rejoiced.
Of love, the grand impulsion, we behold
The love that lends her grace
Among the starry fold.
Then at new flood of customary morn,
Look at her through her showers,
Her mists, her streaming gold,
A wonder edges the familiar face:
She wears no more that robe of printed hours;
Half strange seems Earth, and sweeter than her flowers. (1888)

## ON HEARING THE NEWS FROM VENICE

(The Death of Robert Browning)

Now dumb is he who waked the world to speak,
And voiceless hangs the world beside his bier.
Our words are sobs, our cry of praise a tear;
We are the smitten mortal, we the weak.
We see a spirit on Earth's loftiest peak
Shine, and wing hence the way he makes more clear;
See a great Tree of Life that never sear
Dropped leaf for aught that age or storms might wreak.
Such ending is not Death; such living shows
What wide illumination brightness sheds
From one big heart, to conquer man's old foes —
The coward, and the tyrant, and the force
Of all those weedy monsters raising heads
When Song is murk from springs of turbid source. (1889)

## WIND ON THE LYRE

That was the chirp of Ariel
You heard, as overhead it flew,
The farther going more to dwell,
And wing our green to wed our blue;
But whether note of joy or knell,
Not his own Father-singer knew;
Nor yet can any mortal tell,
Save only how it shivers through;
The breast of us a sounded shell,
The blood of us a lighted dew. (1892)

## SONG IN THE SONGLESS

They have no song, the sedges dry,
And still they sing.
It is within my breast they sing,
As I pass by.
Within my breast they touch a string,
They wake a sigh.
There is but sound of sedges dry;
In me they sing. (1900)

## "ATKINS"

Yonder's the man with his life in his hand,
Legs on the march for whatever the land,
Or to the slaughter, or to the maiming,
Getting the dole of a dog for pay.
Laurels he clasps in the words "duty done,"
England his heart under every sun —
Exquisite humor! that gives him a naming
Base to the ear as an ass's bray. (1901)

## YOUTH IN AGE

Once I was part of the music I heard
On the boughs or sweet between earth and sky;
For joy of the beating of wings on high
My heart shot into the breast of the bird.

---

72. **music . . . ours.** See note on *The Blessed Damozel*, line 54, page 501.

*Wind on the Lyre.* 1. **Ariel,** a fairy spirit in Shakespeare's *The Tempest.* 4. **green . . . blue,** earth . . . heaven. 6. **Father-singer,** Shakespeare.

*"Atkins."* Tommy Atkins is the conventional name of a soldier of the British army. See Kipling's *Tommy,* p. 880.

I hear it now and I see it fly,
And a life in wrinkles again is stirred;
My heart shoots into the breast of the bird,
As it will for sheer love till the last long sigh.
(1908)

## WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

### THE CHAPEL IN LYONESS

SIR OZANA LE CURE HARDY; SIR GALAHAD; SIR BORS DE GANYS

*Sir Ozana.* All day long and every day,
From Christmas-Eve to Whit-Sunday,
Within that Chapel-aisle I lay,
And no man came a-near.

Naked to the waist was I,
And deep within my breast did lie,
Though no man any blood could spy,
The truncheon of a spear.

No meat did ever pass my lips
Those days. Alas! the sunlight slips
From off the gilded parclose, dips,
And night comes on apace.

My arms lay back behind my head;
Over my raised-up knees was spread
A samite cloth of white and red;
A rose lay on my face.

Many a time I tried to shout;
But as in dream of battle-rout,
My frozen speech would not well out;
I could not even weep.

With inward sigh I see the sun
Fade off the pillars one by one;
My heart faints when the day is done,
Because I cannot sleep.

Sometimes strange thoughts pass through my head;
Not like a tomb is this my bed —
Yet oft I think that I am dead,
That round my tomb is writ,

"Ozana of the hardy heart,
Knight of the Table Round,
Pray for his soul, lords, of your part;
A true knight he was found."

Ah! me, I cannot fathom it. [*He sleeps.*

*Sir Galahad.* All day long and every day,
Till his madness passed away,
I watched Ozana as he lay
Within the gilded screen.

All my singing moved him not;
As I sung my heart grew hot,
With the thought of Launcelot,
Far away, I ween.

So I went a little space
From out the chapel, bathed my face
In the stream that runs apace
By the churchyard wall.

There I plucked a faint wild rose,
Hard by where the linden grows,
Sighing over silver rows
Of the lilies tall.

I laid the flower across his mouth;
The sparkling drops seemed good for drouth;
He smiled, turned round toward the south,
Held up a golden tress.

The light smote on it from the west;
He drew the covering from his breast,
Against his heart that hair he pressed;
Death him soon will bless.

*Sir Bors.* I entered by the western door;
I saw a knight's helm lying there;
I raised my eyes from off the floor,
And caught the gleaming of his hair.

I stepped full softly up to him;
I laid my chin upon his head;
I felt him smile; my eyes did swim,
I was so glad he was not dead.

I heard Ozana murmur low,
"There comes no sleep nor any love."
But Galahad stooped and kissed his brow —
He shivered; I saw his pale lips move.

*Sir Ozana.* There comes no sleep nor any love;
Ah me! I shiver with delight.
I am so weak I cannot move;
God move me to thee, dear, tonight!
Christ help! I have but little wit.
My life went wrong; I see it writ,

---

*The Chapel in Lyoness.* Lyoness was a mythical region, now submerged, lying off the coast of Cornwall. It was the land from which King Arthur came and the scene of his "last great battle of the West." Sir Ozana of the Bold Heart was one of the knights with Queen Guenevere when she was carried off by Meliagrance as related in Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*, 19, 1-2. Sir Galahad and Sir Bors accompanied Percivale on the quest for the Holy Grail. See *The Holy Grail*, page 137.
2. **Whit-Sunday**, the seventh Sunday after Easter. 11. **parclose**, a screen or railing in a church dividing the chapel from the main body. 15. **samite**, a kind of heavy silk.

40. **Launcelot**, the lover of Guenevere. See *Lancelot and Elaine*, page 120.

"Ozana of the hardy heart,
Knight of the Table Round,
Pray for his soul, lords, on your part;
A good knight he was found."

Now I begin to fathom it. [*He dies.*

*Sir Bors.* Galahad sits dreamily:
What strange things may his eyes see,
Great blue eyes fixed full on me?
On his soul, Lord, have mercy.

*Sir Galahad.* Ozana, shall I pray for thee?
Her cheek is laid to thine;
No long time hence, also I see
Thy wasted fingers twine

Within the tresses of her hair
That shineth gloriously,
Thinly outspread in the clear air
Against the jasper sea.

(1856)

## THE DEFENCE OF GUENEVERE

But, knowing now that they would have her speak,
She threw her wet hair backward from her brow,
Her hand close to her mouth touching her cheek,

As though she had had there a shameful blow,
And feeling it shameful to feel aught but shame
All through her heart, yet felt her cheek burned so,

She must a little touch it; like one lame
She walked away from Gauwaine, with her head
Still lifted up; and on her cheek of flame

The tears dried quick; she stopped at last and said:
"O knights and lords, it seems but little skill
To talk of well-known things past now and dead.

"God wot I ought to say, I have done ill,
And pray you all forgiveness heartily!
Because you must be right, such great lords; still

"Listen — suppose your time were come to die,
And you were quite alone and very weak;
Yea, laid a-dying, while very mightily

"The wind was ruffling up the narrow streak
Of river through your broad lands running well;
Suppose a hush should come, then someone speak:

" 'One of these cloths is heaven, and one is hell;
Now choose one cloth forever—which they be,
I will not tell you; you must somehow tell

" 'Of your own strength and mightiness; here, see!'
Yea, yea, my lord, and you to ope your eyes,
At foot of your familiar bed to see

"A great God's angel standing, with such dyes,
Not known on earth, on his great wings, and hands,
Held out two ways, light from the inner skies

"Showing him well, and making his commands
Seem to be God's commands, moreover, too,
Holding within his hands the cloths on wands;

"And one of these strange choosing cloths was blue,
Wavy and long, and one cut short and red;
No man could tell the better of the two.

"After a shivering half-hour you said:
'God help! heaven's color, the blue'; and he said, 'hell.'
Perhaps you would then roll upon your bed,

"And cry to all good men that loved you well,
'Ah, Christ! if only I had known, known, known';
Launcelot went away, then I could tell,

"Like wisest man how all things would be, moan,
And roll and hurt myself, and long to die,
And yet fear much to die for what was sown.

"Nevertheless, you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie;
Whatever may have happened through these years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie."

Her voice was low at first, being full of tears,
But as it cleared, it grew full loud and shrill,
Growing a windy shriek in all men's ears,

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*The Defence of Guenevere.* See Critical Notes.
11. **skill**, reason, wisdom. 13. **wot**, knows.

46. **you . . . lie.** Gawaine is here presented as an accuser. See Critical Note on title.

A ringing in their startled brains, until
She said that Gauwaine lied, then her voice sunk,
And her great eyes began again to fill,

Though still she stood right up, and never shrunk,
But spoke on bravely, glorious lady fair!
Whatever tears her full lips may have drunk,

She stood, and seemed to think, and wrung her hair,
Spoke out at last with no more trace of shame,
With passionate twisting of her body there:

"It chanced upon a day that Launcelot came
To dwell at Arthur's court — at Christmas-time
This happened; when the heralds sung his name,

"Son of King Ban of Benwick, seemed to chime
Along with all the bells that rang that day,
O'er the white roofs, with little change of rime.

"Christmas and whitened winter passed away,
And over me the April sunshine came,
Made very awful with black hail-clouds; yea,

"And in the summer I grew white with flame,
And bowed my head down; autumn, and the sick
Sure knowledge things would never be the same,

"However often spring might be most thick
Of blossoms and buds, smote on me, and I grew
Careless of most things, let the clock tick, tick,

"To my unhappy pulse, that beat right through
My eager body; while I laughed out loud,
And let my lips curl up at false or true,

"Seemed cold and shallow without any cloud.
Behold, my judges, then the cloths were brought;
While I was dizzied thus, old thoughts would crowd,

"Belonging to the time ere I was bought
By Arthur's great name and his little love;
Must I give up forever then, I thought,

"That which I deemed would ever round me move
Glorifying all things; for a little word,
Scarce ever meant at all, must I now prove

"Stone-cold forever? Pray you, does the Lord
Will that all folks should be quite happy and good?
I love God now a little, if this cord

"Were broken, once for all what striving could
Make me love anything in earth or heaven?
So day by day it grew, as if one should

"Slip slowly down some path worn smooth and even,
Down to a cool sea on a summer day;
Yet still in slipping there was some small leaven

"Of stretched hands catching small stones by the way,
Until one surely reached the sea at last,
And felt strange new joy as the worn head lay

"Back, with the hair like sea-weed; yea, all past
Sweat of the forehead, dryness of the lips,
Washed utterly out by the dear waves o'er-cast,

"In the lone sea, far off from any ships!
Do I not know now of a day in spring?
No minute of that wild day ever slips

"From out my memory; I hear thrushes sing,
And wheresoever I may be, straightway
Thoughts of it all come up with most fresh sting.

"I was half mad with beauty on that day,
And went, without my ladies, all alone,
In a quiet garden walled round every way;

"I was right joyful of that wall of stone,
That shut the flowers and trees up with the sky,
And trebled all the beauty; to the bone —

"Yea, right through to my heart, grown very shy
With wary thoughts — it pierced, and made me glad,
Exceedingly glad, and I knew verily,

"A little thing just then had made me mad;
I dared not think, as I was wont to do,
Sometimes, upon my beauty; if I had

"Held out my long hand up against the blue,

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80. **the cloths.** See lines 21 ff.

And, looking on the tenderly darkened fingers,
Thought that by rights one ought to see quite through,

"There, see you, where the soft still light yet lingers,
Round by the edges; what should I have done,
If this had joined with yellow spotted singers,

"And startling green drawn upward by the sun?
But shouting, loosed out, see now! all my hair,
And trancedly stood watching the west wind run

"With faintest half-heard breathing sound — why there
I lose my head e'en now in doing this.
But shortly listen: In that garden fair

"Came Launcelot walking; this is true, the kiss
Wherewith we kissed in meeting that spring day,
I scarce dare talk of the remembered bliss,

"When both our mouths went wandering in one way,
And aching sorely, met among the leaves;
Our hands, being left behind, strained far away.

"Never within a yard of my bright sleeves
Had Launcelot come before — and now so nigh!
After that day why is it Guenevere grieves?

"Nevertheless, you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie,
Whatever happened on through all those years —
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie.

"Being such a lady, could I weep these tears
If this were true? A great queen such as I,
Having sinned this way, straight her conscience sears;

"And afterwards she liveth hatefully,
Slaying and poisoning — certes never weeps;
Gauwaine, be friends now, speak me lovingly.

"Do I not see how God's dear pity creeps
All through your frame, and trembles in your mouth?
Remember in what grave your mother sleeps,

"Buried in some place far down in the south,
Men are forgetting as I speak to you;
By her head, severed in that awful drouth

"Of pity that drew Agravaine's fell blow,
I pray your pity! let me not scream out
Forever after, when the shrill winds blow

"Through half your castle-locks! let me not shout
Forever after in the winter night
When you ride out alone! in battle-rout

"Let not my rusting tears make your sword light!
Ah! God of mercy, how he turns away!
So, ever must I dress me to the fight,

"So — let God's justice work! Gauwaine, I say,
See me hew down your proofs; yea, all men know,
Even as you said, how Mellyagraunce one day,

"One bitter day in *la Fausse Garde*, for so
All good knights held it after, saw —
Yea, sirs, by cursed unknightly outrage, though

"You, Gauwaine, held his word without a flaw,
This Mellyagraunce saw blood upon my bed —
Whose blood then pray you? is there any law

"To make a queen say why some spots of red
Lie on her coverlet? or will you say,
'Your hands are white, lady, as when you wed,

" 'Where did you bleed?' and must I stammer out — 'Nay,
I blush indeed, fair lord, only to rend
My sleeve up to my shoulder, where there lay

" 'A knife-point last night': so must I defend
The honor of the Lady Guenevere?
Not so, fair lords, even if the world should end

"This very day, and you were judges here
Instead of God. Did you see Mellyagraunce

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126. **yellow spotted singers,** thrushes (line 106). 153. **your mother.** According to Malory she was Morgawse, Arthur's sister. She was slain by her son Sir Gaheris (not Agravaine) when he found her faithless to her husband, King Lot, in Orkney. (*Le Morte Darthur,* 10, 24.)

168. **Mellyagraunce.** See Critical Note on title. 169. **la Fausse Garde,** the false prison. 171. **unknightly outrage.** Meliagrance had entered the chamber of Guenevere before she was up.

When Launcelot stood by him? — what white fear

“Curdled his blood, and how his teeth did dance,
His side sink in? as my knight cried and said:
‘Slayer of unarmed men, here is a chance!

“ ‘Setter of traps, I pray you guard your head;
By God, I am so glad to fight with you,
Stripper of ladies, that my hand feels lead

“ ‘For driving weight; hurrah now! draw and do,
For all my wounds are moving in my breast,
And I am getting mad with waiting so.’

“He struck his hands together o’er the beast,
Who fell down flat, and groveled at his feet,
And groaned at being slain so young. ‘At least,’

“My knight said, ‘Rise you, sir, who are so fleet
At catching ladies; half-armed will I fight,
My left side all uncovered!’ Then, I weet,

“Up sprang Sir Mellyagraunce with great delight
Upon his knave’s face; not until just then
Did I quite hate him, as I saw my knight

“Along the lists look to my stake and pen
With such a joyous smile, it made me sigh
From agony beneath my waist-chain, when

“The fight began, and to me they drew nigh;
Ever Sir Launcelot kept him on the right,
And traversed warily, and ever high

“And fast leapt caitiff’s sword, until my knight
Sudden threw up his sword to his left hand,
Caught it, and swung it; that was all the fight,

“Except a spout of blood on the hot land;
For it was hottest summer; and I know
I wondered how the fire, while I should stand,

“And burn, against the heat, would quiver so,
Yards above my head; thus these matters went;
Which things were only warnings of the woe

“That fell on me. Yet Mellyagraunce was shent,
For Mellyagraunce had fought against the Lord;
Therefore, my lords, take heed lest you be blent

“With all his wickedness—say no rash word
Against me, being so beautiful; my eyes,
Wept all away to gray, may bring some sword

“To drown you in your blood; see my breast rise,
Like waves of purple sea, as here I stand;
And how my arms are moved in wonderful wise;

“Yea, also at my full heart’s strong command,
See through my long throat how the words go up
In ripples to my mouth; how in my hand

“The shadow lies like wine within a cup
Of marvelously colored gold; yea, now
This little wind is rising, look you up,

“And wonder how the light is falling so
Within my moving tresses. Will you dare
When you have looked a little on my brow,

“To say this thing is vile? or will you care
For any plausible lies of cunning woof,
When you can see my face with no lie there

“Forever? Am I not a gracious proof?—
‘But in your chamber Launcelot was found’—
Is there a good knight then would stand aloof,

“When a queen says with gentle queenly sound,
‘O true as steel, come now and talk with me;
I love to see your step upon the ground

“ ‘Unwavering; also well I love to see
That gracious smile light up your face, and hear
Your wonderful words, that all mean verily

“ ‘The thing they seem to mean. Good friend, so dear
To me in everything, come here tonight,
Or else the hours will pass most dull and drear.

“ ‘If you come not, I fear this time I might

---

190. **Setter of traps.** See Critical Note on title. 201. **weet,** observed, knew. 216-217. **while I should stand And burn.** Upon the testimony of Meliagrance she was sentenced to be burned. The appearance and victory of Launcelot saved her.

220. **shent,** destroyed. 222. **blent,** blinded. 242. **But . . . found.** See Critical Notes.

Get thinking overmuch of times gone by,
When I was young, and green hope was in sight;

"'For no man cares now to know why I sigh;
And no man comes to sing me pleasant songs,
Nor any brings me the sweet flowers that lie

"'So thick in the gardens; therefore one so longs
To see you, Launcelot, that we may be
Like children once again, free from all wrongs

"'Just for one night.' Did he not come to me?
What thing could keep true Launcelot away
If I said, 'Come'? There was one less than three

"In my quiet room that night, and we were gay;
Till sudden I rose up, weak, pale, and sick,
Because a bawling broke our dream up; yea,

"I looked at Launcelot's face and could not speak,
For he looked helpless, too, for a little while;
Then I remember how I tried to shriek,

"And could not, but fell down; from tile to tile
The stones they threw up rattled o'er my head
And made me dizzier; till within a while

"My maids were all about me, and my head
On Launcelot's breast was being soothed away
From its white chattering, until Launcelot said . . .

"By God! I will not tell you more today—
Judge any way you will; what matters it?
You know quite well the story of that fray,

"How Launcelot stilled their bawling, the mad fit
That caught up Gauwaine, all, all, verily,
But just that which would save me; these things flit.

"Nevertheless, you, O Sir Gauwaine, lie;
Whatever may have happened these long years,
God knows I speak truth, saying that you lie!

"All I have said is truth, by Christ's dear tears."
She would not speak another word, but stood
Turned sideways, listening, like a man who hears

His brother's trumpet sounding through the wood
Of his foes' lances. She leaned eagerly,
And gave a slight spring sometimes, as she could

At last hear something really; joyfully
Her cheek grew crimson, as the headlong speed
Of the roan charger drew all men to see,
The knight who came was Launcelot at good need. (1858)

## RAPUNZEL

*The Prince (being in the wood near the tower in the evening)*

I could not even think
What made me weep that day
When out of the council-hall
The courtiers passed away—

*The Witch*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair!

*Rapunzel*

Is is not true that every day
She climbeth up the same strange way,
Her scarlet cloak spread broad and gay,
Over my golden hair?

*The Prince*

And left me there alone,
To think on what they said:
"Thou art a king's own son,
'Tis fit that thou should'st wed."

*The Witch*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair!

*Rapunzel*

When I undo the knotted mass,
Fathoms below the shadows pass
Over my hair along the grass.
O my golden hair!

---

280. **mad fit.** Gawaine was not present. See Critical Note on title. 282. **that . . . me,** her innocence.

291. **as,** as if. 295. **knight . . . need.** Launcelot and his kinsmen rescued the Queen from the fire.

*Rapunzel.* This poem is based upon the story of Rapunzel as told in *Grimms' Fairy Tales.* See Critical Notes.

*The Prince*

I put my armor on,
Thinking on what they said:
"Thou art a king's own son,
'Tis fit that thou should'st wed."

*The Witch*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair!

*Rapunzel*

See on the marble parapet
I lean my brow, strive to forget
That fathoms below my hair grows wet
With the dew, my golden hair.

*The Prince*

I rode throughout the town,
Men did not bow the head,
Though I was the king's own son;
"He rides to dream," they said.

*The Witch*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Wind up your hair!

*Rapunzel*

See, on the marble parapet
The faint red stains with tears are wet;
The long years pass, no help comes yet
To free my golden hair.

*The Prince*

For leagues and leagues I rode,
Till hot my armor grew,
Till underneath the leaves
I felt the evening dew.

*The Witch*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Weep through your hair!

*Rapunzel*

And yet—but I am growing old,
For want of love my heart is cold;
Years pass, the while I loose and fold
The fathoms of my hair.

*The Prince* (*in the morning*)

I have heard tales of men, who in the night
Saw paths of stars let down to earth from heaven,
Who followed them until they reached the light
Wherein they dwell, whose sins are all forgiven;

But who went backward when they saw the gate
Of diamond, nor dared to enter in;
All their life long they were content to wait,
Purging them patiently of every sin.

I must have had a dream of some such thing,
And now am just awaking from that dream;
For even in gray dawn those strange words ring
Through heart and brain, and still I see that gleam.

For in my dream at sunset-time I lay
Beneath these beeches, mail and helmet off,
Right full of joy that I had come away
From court; for I was patient of the scoff

That met me always there from day to day,
From any knave or coward of them all;
I was content to live that wretched way;
For truly till I left the council-hall,

And rode forth armed beneath the burning sun,
My gleams of happiness were faint and few,
But then I saw my real life had begun,
And that I should be strong, quite well I knew.

For I was riding out to look for love,
Therefore the birds within the thickets sung;
Even in hot noontide, as I passed, above
The elms o'erswayed with longing toward me hung.

Now some few fathoms from the place where I
Lay in the beech-wood, was a tower fair,
The marble corners faint against the sky;
And dreamily I wondered what lived there,

Because it seemed a dwelling for a queen,
No belfry for the swinging of great bells;
No bolt or stone had ever crushed the green
Shafts, amber and rose walls, no soot that tells

Of the Norse torches burning up the roofs,
On the flower-carven marble could I see;
But rather on all sides I saw the proofs
Of a great loneliness that sickened me,

---

55-56. **gate Of diamond.** In *Revelation*, 21, John sees the New Jerusalem with twelve gates of pearl, and the walls with twelve foundations "garnished with all manner of precious stones." 87. **Norse torches**, a reference to the burning of houses in the early raids of the Norsemen.

Making me feel a doubt that was not fear,
Whether my whole life long had been a dream,
And I should wake up soon in some place, where
The piled-up arms of the fighting angels gleam;

Not born as yet, but going to be born,
No naked baby as I was at first,
But an armėd knight, whom fire, hate, and scorn
Could turn from nothing; my heart almost burst

Beneath the beeches, as I lay a-dreaming,
I tried so hard to read this riddle through,
To catch some golden cord that I saw gleaming
Like gossamer against the autumn blue.

But while I pondered these things, from the wood
There came a black-haired woman, tall and bold,
Who strode straight up to where the tower stood,
And cried out shrilly words, whereon behold—

*The Witch (from the tower)*

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair!

*The Prince*

Ah, Christ! it was no dream then, but there stood
(She comes again) a maiden passing fair,
Against the roof, with face turned to the wood,
Bearing within her arms waves of her yellow hair.

I read my riddle when I saw her stand,
Poor love! her face quite pale against her hair,
Praying to all the leagues of empty land
To save her from the woe she suffered there.

To think! they trod upon her golden hair
In the witches' sabbaths; it was a delight
For these foul things, while she, with thin feet bare,
Stood on the roof upon the winter night,

To plait her dear hair into many plaits,
And then, while God's eye looked upon the thing,
In the very likenesses of Devil's bats,
Upon the ends of her long hair to swing.

And now she stood above the parapet,
And, spreading out her arms, let her hair flow,
Beneath that veil her smooth white forehead set
Upon the marble; more I do not know,

Because before my eyes a film of gold
Floated, as now it floats. O unknown love,
Would that I could thy yellow stair behold,
If still thou standest with lead roof above!

*The Witch (as she passes)*

Is there any who will dare
To climb up the yellow stair,
Glorious Rapunzel's golden hair?

*The Prince*

If it would please God make you sing again,
I think that I might very sweetly die,
My soul somehow reach heaven in joyous pain,
My heavy body on the beech-nuts lie.

Now I remember; what a most strange year,
Most strange and awful, in the beechen wood
I have passed now; I still have a faint fear
It is a kind of dream not understood.

I have seen no one in this wood except
The witch and her; have heard no human tones,
But when the witches' revelry has crept
Between the very jointing of my bones.

Ah! I know now; I could not go away,
But needs must stop to hear her sing that song
She always sings at dawning of the day.
I am not happy here, for I am strong.

And every morning do I whet my sword,
Yet Rapunzel still weeps within the tower,
And still God ties me down to the green sward,
Because I cannot see the gold stair floating lower.

*Rapunzel (sings from the tower)*

My mother taught me prayers
To say when I had need;
I have so many cares,
That I can take no heed
Of many words in them;
But I remember this:
*Christ, bring me to thy bliss.*

---

118. **witches' sabbaths**, nocturnal gatherings of witches and demons to concoct mischief. They participated in various orgies under the leadership of Satan.

*Mary, maid withouten wem,*
*Keep me!* I am lone, I wis,
Yet besides I have made this
By myself: *Give me a kiss,*
*Dear God, dwelling up in heaven!*
Also: *Send me a true knight,*
*Lord Christ, with a steel sword, bright,*
*Broad and trenchant; yea, and seven*
*Spans from hilt to point, O Lord!*
*And let the handle of his sword*
*Be gold on silver, Lord in heaven!*
*Such a sword as I see gleam*
*Sometimes, when they let me dream.*

Yea, besides, I have made this:
*Lord, give Mary a dear kiss,*
*And let gold Michael, who looked down,*
*When I was there, on Rouen town*
*From the spire, bring me that kiss*
*On a lily! Lord, do this!*

These prayers on the dreadful nights
When the witches plait my hair,
And the fearfullest of sights
On the earth and in the air,
Will not let me close my eyes,
I murmur often, mixed with sighs,
That my weak heart will not hold
At some things that I behold.
Nay, not sighs, but quiet groans,
That swell out the little bones
Of my bosom; till a trance
God sends in middle of that dance,
And I behold the countenance
Of Michael, and can feel no more
The bitter east wind biting sore
My naked feet; can see no more
The crayfish on the leaden floor,
That mock with feeler and grim claw.

Yea, often in that happy trance,
Beside the blessed countenance
Of golden Michael, on the spire
Glowing all crimson in the fire
Of sunset, I behold a face,
Which sometime, if God give me grace,
May kiss me in this very place.

(*Evening in the tower*)
*Rapunzel*

It grows half way between the dark and light;
Love, we have been six hours here alone;
I fear that she will come before the night,
And if she finds us thus we are undone.

*The Prince*

Nay, draw a little nearer, that your breath
May touch my lips, let my cheek feel your arm;
Now tell me, did you ever see a death,
Or ever see a man take mortal harm!

*Rapunzel*

Once came two knights and fought with swords below,
And while they fought I scarce could look at all,
My head swam so, after a moaning low
Drew my eyes down; I saw against the wall

One knight lean dead, bleeding from head and breast,
Yet seemed it like a line of poppies red
In the golden twilight, as he took his rest,
In the dusky time he scarcely seemed dead.

But the other, on his face six paces off,
Lay moaning, and the old familiar name
He muttered through the grass, seemed like a scoff
Of some lost soul remembering his past fame.

His helm all dinted lay beside him there,
The visor-bars were twisted toward the face,
The crest, which was a lady very fair,
Wrought wonderfully, was shifted from its place.

The showered mail-rings on the speed-walk lay;
Perhaps my eyes were dazzled with the light
That blazed in the west, yet surely on that day
Some crimson thing had changed the grass from bright

Pure green I love so. But the knight who died
Lay there for days after the other went;
Until one day I heard a voice that cried,
"Fair knight, I see Sir Robert we were sent

"To carry dead or living to the king."
So the knights came and bore him straight away
On their lance truncheons, such a battered thing,
His mother had not known him on that day,

---

163. **withouten wem,** without blemish. 164. **wis,** know. 178. **gold Michael,** a statue of the archangel Michael (*Revelation,* 12:7) on the spire of the cathedral in Rouen, a city in northern France.

241. **lance truncheons,** shafts of spears.

But for his helm-crest, a gold lady fair
Wrought wonderfully.

*The Prince*

Ah, they were brothers then,
And often rode together, doubtless where
The swords were thickest, and were loyal men,

Until they fell in these same evil dreams.

*Rapunzel*

Yea, love; but shall we not depart from hence?
The white moon groweth golden fast, and gleams
Between the aspen stems; I fear—and yet a sense

Of fluttering victory comes over me,
That will not let me fear aright; my heart—
Feel how it beats, love, strives to get to thee—
I breathe so fast that my lips need must part;

Your breath swims round my mouth, but let us go.

*The Prince*

I, Sebald, also, pluck from off the staff
The crimson banner, let it lie below,
Above it in the wind let grasses laugh.

Now let us go, love, down the winding stair,
With fingers intertwined; aye, feel my sword!
I wrought it long ago, with golden hair
Flowing about the hilts, because a word,

Sung by a minstrel old, had set me dreaming
Of a sweet bowed-down face with yellow hair;
Betwixt green leaves I used to see it gleaming,
A half smile on the lips, though lines of care

Had sunk the cheeks, and made the great eyes hollow;
What other work in all the world had I,
But through all turns of fate that face to follow?
But wars and business kept me there to die.

O child, I should have slain my brother, too,
My brother, Love, lain moaning in the grass,
Had I not ridden out to look for you,
When I had watched the gilded courtiers pass

From the golden hall. But it is strange your name
Is not the same the minstrel sung of yore;
You called it Rapunzel, 'tis not the name.
See, love, the stems shine through the open door.

(*Morning in the woods*)
*Rapunzel*

O Love! me and my unknown name you have well won;
The witch's name was Rapunzel; eh! not so sweet?
No!—but is this real grass, love, that I tread upon?
What call they these blue flowers that lean across my feet?

*The Prince*

Dip down your dear face in the dewy grass, O love!
And ever let the sweet slim harebells, tenderly hung,
Kiss both your parted lips; and I will hang above,
And try to sing that song the dreamy harper sung.

*He sings*

'Twixt the sunlight and the shade
Float up memories of my maid,
God, remember Guendolen!

Gold or gems she did not wear,
But her yellow rippled hair,
Like a veil, hid Guendolen!

'Twixt the sunlight and the shade,
My rough hands so strangely made,
Folded Golden Guendolen;

Hands used to grip the sword-hilt hard,
Framed her face, while on the sward;
Tears fell down from Guendolen.

Guendolen now speaks no word,
Hands fold around about the sword,
Now no more of Guendolen.

Only 'twixt the light and shade
Floating memories of my maid
Make me pray for Guendolen.

---

287. **'Twixt the sunlight**, etc. This song was first published in 1856 under the title of *Hands*.

*Guendolen*

I kiss thee, new-found name; but I will never go;
Your hands need never grip the hammered sword again
But all my golden hair shall ever round you flow,
Between the light and shade from Golden Guendolen.

*(Afterwards, in the Palace)*

*King Sebald*

I took my armor off,
Put on king's robes of gold;
Over her kirtle green
The gold fell fold on fold.

*The Witch (out of hell)*

Guendolen! Guendolen!
One lock of hair!

*Guendolen*

I am so glad, for every day
He kisses me much the same way
As in the tower; under the sway
Of all my golden hair.

*King Sebald*

We rode throughout the town,
A gold crown on my head,
Through all the gold-hung streets,
"Praise God!" the people said.

*The Witch*

Guendolen! Guendolen!
Lend me your hair!

*Guendolen*

Verily, I seem like one
Who, when day is almost done,
Through a thick wood meets the sun
That blazes in her hair.

*King Sebald*

Yea, at the palace gates,
"Praise God!" the great knights said,
"For Sebald the high king,
And the lady's golden head."

*The Witch*

Woe is me! Guendolen
Sweeps back her hair.

*Guendolen*

Nothing wretched now, no screams;
I was unhappy once in dreams,
And even now a harsh voice seems
To hang about my hair.

*The Witch*

WOE! THAT ANY MAN COULD DARE
TO CLIMB UP THE YELLOW STAIR,
GLORIOUS GUENDOLEN'S GOLDEN HAIR.

(1858)

## CONCERNING GEFFRAY TESTE NOIRE

And if you meet the Canon of Chimay,
As going to Ortaise you well may do,
Greet him from John of Castel Neuf, and say
All that I tell you, for all this is true.

This Geffray Teste Noire was a Gascon thief,
Who, under shadow of the English name,
Pilled all such towns and countries as were lief
To King Charles and St. Dennis; thought it blame

If anything escaped him; so my lord,
The Duke of Berry, sent Sir John Bonne Lance,
And other knights, good players with the sword,
To check this thief, and give the land a chance.

Therefore we set out bastides round the tower
That Geffray held, the strong thief! like a king,
High perched upon the rock of Ventadour,
Hopelessly strong by Christ! It was mid spring

When first I joined the little army there
With ten good spears. Auvergne is hot; each day
We sweated, armed before the barrier;
Good feats of arms were done there often—eh?

---

*Concerning Geffray Teste Noire.* Geffray with the Black Head was a freebooter from the province of Gascony, in southern France, during the period of 1375-88. His stronghold was Ventadour (line 15), a castle in the province of Auvergne. The poem is addressed to a man named Alleyne (line 27) by John of Newcastle (line 3), who, with Sir John of the Good Lance (line 10), Aldovrand (line 90), and other warriors, took part in the attack upon Geffray's band. Geffray appears in the *Chronicles* of Jean Froissart (1337-1410?), the famous French historian and poet, Volume 1, Chapter 345; Volume 2, Chapters 147-148.

**1. Canon of Chimay,** Froissart. Chimay is a town in Belgium near the French border. **2. Ortaise,** the name of the house of the Earl of Foiz and Béarn, a favorite gathering place of knights, in the province of Béarn, in southern France. **7. Pilled,** pillaged, plundered. **lief,** dear. **8. King Charles,** Charles V of France (1337-80). **St. Dennis,** the first bishop of Paris and the patron saint of France (3d century). **10. Duke of Berry,** Jean de France (1340-1416), Count of Poictiers. He was the son of John II, king of France (1350-64), and the King's lieutenant in southern France. **13. bastides,** temporary huts or towers erected for besieging purposes.

Your brother was slain there? I mind me now,
A right good man-at-arms, God pardon him!
I think 'twas Geffray smote him on the brow
With some spiked ax, and while he tottered, dim

About the eyes, the spear of Alleyne Roux
Slipped through his camaille and his throat; well, well!
Alleyne is paid now; your name Alleyne too?
Mary! how strange—but this tale I would tell—

For spite of all our bastides, damned Blackhead
Would ride abroad whene'er he chose to ride—
We could not stop him; many a burgher bled
Dear gold all around his girdle; far and wide

The villaynes dwelt in utter misery
'Twixt us and thief Sir Geffray; hauled this way
By Sir Bonne Lance at one time, he gone by,
Down comes this Teste Noire on another day.

And therefore they dig up the stone, grind corn,
Hew wood, draw water—yea, they lived, in short,
As I said just now, utterly forlorn,
Till this our knave and Blackhead was outfought.

So Bonne Lance fretted, thinking of some trap
Day after day, till on a time he said:
"John of Newcastle, if we have good hap,
We catch our thief in two days." "How?" I said.

"Why, sir, today he rideth out again,
Hoping to take well certain sumpter mules
From Carcassonne, going with little train,
Because, forsooth, he thinketh us mere fools;

"But if we set an ambush in some wood,
He is but dead; so, sir, take thirty spears
To Verville forest, if it seem you good."
Then felt I like the horse in Job, who hears

The dancing trumpet sound, and we went forth;
And my red lion on the spear-head flapped,
As faster than the cool wind we rode north,
Toward the wood of Verville; thus it happed.

We rode a soft space on that day while spies
Got news about Sir Geffray; the red wine
Under the roadside bush was clear; the flies,
The dragon-flies I mind me most, did shine

In brighter arms than ever I put on;
So—"Geffray," said our spies, "would pass that way
Next day at sundown"; then he must be won;
And so we entered Verville wood next day,

In the afternoon; through it the highway runs,
'Twixt copses of green hazel, very thick,
And underneath, with glimmering of suns,
The primroses are happy; the dews lick

The soft green moss. "Put cloths about your arms
Lest they should glitter; surely they will go
In a long thin line, watchful for alarms,
With all their carriages of booty, so—

"Lay down my pennon in the grass—Lord God!
What have we lying here? will they be cold,
I wonder, being so bare, above the sod,
Instead of under? This was a knight, too, fold

"Lying on fold of ancient rusted mail;
No plate at all, gold rowels to the spurs,
And see the quiet gleam of turquoise pale
Along the ceinture; but the long time blurs

"Even the tinder of his coat to naught,
Except these scraps of leather; see how white
The skull is, loose within the coif! He fought
A good fight, maybe, ere he was slain quite.

25. **Alleyne Roux**, a nephew of Geffray. 26. **camaille**, a piece of armor protecting the neck and shoulders. 33. **villaynes**, peasants. 46. **sumpter mules**, pack mules. 47. **Carcassonne**, a manufacturing city in southern France.

52. **horse in Job.** *Job*, 39:19-25.—"He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword" (verses 21-22). 73. **pennon**, banner. 80. **ceinture**, girdle, belt. 81. **tinder of his coat**, the inflammable fabric of his coat. 83. **coif**, a defensive skullcap made of iron.

"No armor on the legs, too; strange in faith—
A little skeleton for a knight though—ah!
This one is bigger; truly without scathe
His enemies escaped not—ribs driven out far—

"That must have reached the heart, I doubt—how now,
What say you, Aldovrand—a woman? why?"
"Under the coif a gold wreath on the brow,
Yea, see the hair not gone to powder, lie,

"Golden, no doubt, once—yea, and very small—
This for a knight; but for a dame, my lord,
These loose-hung bones seem shapely still, and tall—
Didst ever see a woman's bones, my lord?"

Often, God help me! I remember when
I was a simple boy, fifteen years old,
The Jacquerie froze up the blood of men
With their fell deeds, not fit now to be told.

God help again! we entered Beauvais town,
Slaying them fast, whereto I helped, mere boy
As I was then; we gentles cut them down,
These burners and defilers, with great joy.

Reason for that, too, in the great church there
These fiends had lit a fire, that soon went out,
The church at Beauvais being so great and fair—
My father, who was by me, gave a shout

Between a beast's howl and a woman's scream,
Then, panting, chuckled to me: "John, look! look!
Count the dames' skeletons!" From some bad dream
Like a man just awaked, my father shook;

And I, being faint with smelling the burnt bones,
And very hot with fighting down the street,
And sick of such a life, fell down; with groans
My head went weakly nodding to my feet.—

—An arrow had gone through her tender throat,
And her right wrist was broken; then I saw
The reason why she had on that warcoat—
Their story came out clear without a flaw;

For when he knew that they were being waylaid,
He threw it over her, yea, hood and all;
Whereby he was much hacked, while they were stayed
By those their murderers; many an one did fall

Beneath his arm, no doubt, so that he cleared
Their circle, bore his death-wound out of it;
But as they rode, some archer least afeared
Drew a strong bow, and thereby she was hit.

Still as he rode he knew not she was dead—
Thought her but fainted from her broken wrist,
He bound with his great leathern belt—she bled?
Who knows! he bled too; neither was there missed

The beating of her heart, his heart beat well
For both of them, till here, within this wood,
He died scarce sorry; easy this to tell;
After these years the flowers forget their blood.—

How could it be? Never before that day,
However much a soldier I might be,
Could I look on a skeleton and say
I care not for it, shudder not—now see,

Over those bones I sat and pored for hours,
And thought, and dreamed, and still I scarce could see
The small white bones that lay upon the flowers,
But evermore I saw the lady; she

With her dear gentle walking leading in,
By a chain of silver twined about her wrists,
Her loving knight, mounted and armed to win
Great honor for her, fighting in the lists.

O most pale face, that brings such joy and sorrow
Into men's hearts—yea, too, so piercing sharp
That joy is, that it marcheth nigh to sorrow
Forever—like an overwinded harp.

Your face must hurt me always; pray you now,

---

99. **The Jacquerie,** a revolt of the French peasants against the nobles in 1358. 101. **Beauvais,** an important city in northern France. 117. **An arrow,** etc. This line connects with line 96.

Doth it not hurt you too? seemeth some pain
To hold you always, pain to hold your brow
So smooth, unwrinkled ever; yea, again,

Your long eyes where the lids seem like to drop,
Would you not, lady, were they shut fast feel
Far merrier? There so high they will not stop,
They are most sly to glide forth and to steal

Into my heart; *I kiss their soft lids there,*
*And in green garden scarce can stop my lips*
*From wandering on your face, but that your hair*
*Falls down and tangles me, back my face slips.*

Or say your mouth—I saw you drink red wine
Once at a feast; how slowly it sank in,
As though you feared that some wild fate might twine
Within that cup, and slay you for a sin.

And when you talk your lips do arch and move
In such wise that a language new I know
Besides their sound; they quiver, too, with love
When you are standing silent; know this, too,

I saw you kissing once, like a curved sword
That bites with all its edge, did your lips lie,
Curled gently, slowly, long time could afford
For caught-up breathings; like a dying sigh

They gathered up their lines and went away,
And still kept twitching with a sort of smile,
As likely to be weeping presently —
Your hands, too — how I watched them all the while!

"Cry out St. Peter now," quoth Aldovrand;
I cried, "St. Peter," broke out from the wood
With all my spears; we met them hand to hand,
And shortly slew them; natheless, by the rood,

We caught not Blackhead then, or any day;
Months after that he died at last in bed,
From a wound picked up at a barrier-fray;
That same year's end a steel bolt in the head,

And much bad living killed Teste Noire at last;
John Froissart knoweth he is dead by now,
No doubt, but knoweth not this tale just past;
Perchance then you can tell him what I show.

In my new castle, down beside the Eure,
There is a little chapel of squared stone,
Painted inside and out; in green nook pure
There did I lay them, every wearied bone;

And over it they lay, with stone-white hand
Clasped fast together, hair made bright with gold
This Jaques Picard, known through many lands,
Wrought cunningly; he's dead now — I am old.

(1858)

## THE GILLYFLOWER OF GOLD

A golden gillyflower today
I wore upon my helm alway,
And won the prize of this tourney.
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

However well Sir Giles might sit,
His sun was weak to wither it;
Lord Miles's blood was dew on it.
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

Although my spear in splinters flew,
From John's steel-coat, my eye was true;
I wheeled about, and cried for you,
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

Yea, do not doubt my heart was good,
Though my sword flew like rotten wood,
To shout, although I scarcely stood,
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

My hand was steady too, to take
My ax from round my neck, and break
John's steel-coat up for my love's sake.
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée —*

When I stood in my tent again,
Arming afresh, I felt a pain
Take hold of me, I was so fain —
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée —*

---

193. **the Eure,** a river in northern France; it empties into the Seine. 199. **Jaques Picard,** an imaginary sculptor.
*The Gillyflower of Gold.* 4. **la belle jaune giroflée,** the beautiful yellow gillyflower.

To hear *Honneur aux fils des preux!*
Right in my ears again, and shew
The gillyflower blossomed new.
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

The Sieur Guillaume against me came,
His tabard bore three points of flame
From a red heart; with little blame —
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée* —

Our tough spears crackled up like straw;
He was the first to turn and draw
His sword, that had nor speck nor flaw;
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

But I felt weaker than a maid,
And my brain, dizzied and afraid,
Within my helm a fierce tune played,
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée,*

Until I thought of your dear head,
Bowed to the gillyflower bed,
The yellow flowers stained with red;
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

Crash! how the swords met — *giroflée!*
The fierce tune in my helm would play,
*La belle! la belle! jaune giroflée!*
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

Once more the great swords met again;
"*La belle! la belle!*" but who fell then?
Le Sieur Guillaume, who struck down ten;
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*

And as with mazed and unarmed face
Toward my own crown and the Queen's place,
They led me at a gentle pace —
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée* —

I almost saw your quiet head
Bowed o'er the gillyflower bed,
The yellow flowers stained with red.
*Hah! hah! la belle jaune giroflée.*
(1858)

## SHAMEFUL DEATH

There were four of us about that bed:
The mass-priest knelt at the side,
I and his mother stood at the head,
Over his feet lay the bride;
We were quite sure that he was dead,
Though his eyes were open wide.

He did not die in the night,
He did not die in the day,
But in the morning twilight
His spirit passed away,
When neither sun nor moon was bright,
And the trees were merely gray.

He was not slain with the sword,
Knight's ax, or the knightly spear,
Yet spoke he never a word
After he came in here;
I cut away the cord
From the neck of my brother dear.

He did not strike one blow,
For the recreants came behind,
In a place where the hornbeams grow,
A path right hard to find,
For the hornbeam boughs swing so
That the twilight makes it blind.

They lighted a great torch then,
When his arms were pinioned fast,
Sir John the knight of the Fen,
Sir Guy of the Dolorous Blast,
With knights threescore and ten,
Hung brave Lord Hugh at last.

I am threescore and ten,
And my hair is all turned gray,
But I met Sir John of the Fen,
Long ago on a summer day,
And am glad to think of the moment when
I took his life away.

I am threescore and ten,
And my strength is mostly passed,
But long ago I and my men,
When the sky was overcast,
And the smoke rolled over the reeds of the fen,
Slew Guy of the Dolorous Blast.

And now, knights all of you,
I pray you pray for Sir Hugh,
A good knight and a true,
And for Alice, his wife, pray too.
(1858)

## THE EVE OF CRÉCY

Gold on her head, and gold on her feet,
And gold where the hems of her kirtle meet,
And a golden girdle round my sweet;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

---

25. **Honneur . . . preux,** honor to the sons of valiant knights. 30. **tabard,** a kind of cloak or mantle worn by knights. 31. **blame,** damage.

*Shameful Death.* 2. **mass-priest,** a priest whose special duty was to say mass for the dead.

21. **hornbeams,** trees with smooth gray bark and leaves resembling those of the beech.

*The Eve of Crécy.* Crécy is a village in northern France, the scene of a famous battle won by the English over the French in 1346. The poem is spoken by a French knight (Sir Lambert of the Wood, line 18), as he muses before the battle on what the chance of victory may bring him.

4. **qu'elle est belle La Marguerite,** how beautiful is Marguerite.

Margaret's maids are fair to see,
Freshly dressed and pleasantly;
Margaret's hair falls down to her knee;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

If I were rich I would kiss her feet;
I would kiss the place where the gold hems meet,
And the golden kirtle round my sweet —
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

Ah me! I have never touched her hand;
When the arrière-ban goes through the land,
Six basnets under my pennon stand;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

And many an one grins under his hood:
Sir Lambert du Bois, with all his men good,
Has neither food nor firewood;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

If I were rich I would kiss her feet,
And the golden girdle of my sweet,
And thereabouts where the gold hems meet;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

Yet even now it is good to think,
While my poor varlets grumble and drink
In my desolate hall, where the fires sink —
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite* —

Of Margaret sitting glorious there,
In glory of gold and glory of hair,
And glory of glorious face most fair;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

Likewise tonight I make good cheer,
Because this battle draweth near;
For what have I to lose or fear?
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

For, look you, my horse is good to prance
A right fair measure in this war-dance
Before the eyes of Philip of France;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

And sometime it may hap, perdie,
While my new towers stand up three and three,
And my hall gets painted fair to see —
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite* —

That folks may say: Times change, by the rood,
For Lambert, banneret of the wood,
Has heaps of food and firewood;
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.*

And wonderful eyes, too, under the hood
Of a damsel of right noble blood.
St. Ives, for Lambert of the Wood!
*Ah! qu'elle est belle La Marguerite.* (1858)

## THE SAILING OF THE SWORD

Across the empty garden-beds,
*When the Sword went out to sea,*
I scarcely saw my sisters' heads
Bowed each beside a tree.
I could not see the castle-leads,
*When the Sword went out to sea.*

Alicia wore a scarlet gown,
*When the Sword went out to sea,*
But Ursula's was russet brown;
For the mist we could not see
The scarlet roofs of the good town,
*When the Sword went out to sea.*

Green holly in Alicia's hand,
*When the Sword went out to sea;*
With sear oak-leaves did Ursula stand;
O! yet alas for me!
I did but bear a peeled white wand,
*When the Sword went out to sea.*

Oh, russet brown and scarlet bright,
*When the Sword went out to sea,*
My sisters wore; I wore but white.
Red, brown, and white are three;
Three damozels; each had a knight,
*When the Sword went out to sea.*

Sir Robert shouted loud, and said,
*When the Sword went out to sea,*
"Alicia, while I see thy head,
What shall I bring for thee?"
"Oh, my sweet lord, a ruby red —"
*The Sword went out to sea.*

Sir Miles said, while the sails hung down,
*When the Sword went out to sea,*
"Oh, Ursula! while I see the town,
What shall I bring for thee?"
"Dear knight, bring back a falcon brown" —
*The Sword went out to sea.*

But my Roland, no word he said
*When the Sword went out to sea,*
But only turned away his head —

---

14. **arrière-ban**, a proclamation calling men to arms; also, a body of vassals called to arms. 15. **basnets**, light steel helmets. **pennon**, banner. 39. **Philip of France**, Philip VI, king of France (1328-50). 41. **perdie**, a French oath, *par Dieu*, meaning *by God*. 46. **banneret**, a knight who could lead vassals into the field under his own banner.

51. **St. Ives**, the patron saint of lawyers (died 1303). The name is used here as an oath.

*The Sailing of the Sword.* 5. **castle-leads**, leaden roofs of the castle.

A quick shriek came from me:
"Come back, dear lord, to your white maid"—
*The Sword went out to sea.*

The hot sun bit the garden-beds,
*When the Sword came back from sea;*
Beneath an apple-tree our heads
Stretched out toward the sea;
Gray gleamed the thirsty castle-leads,
*When the Sword came back from sea.*

Lord Robert brought a ruby red,
*When the Sword came back from sea;*
He kissed Alicia on the head —
"I am come back to thee;
'Tis time, sweet love, that we were wed,
*Now the Sword is back from sea!"*

Sir Miles he bore a falcon brown,
*When the Sword came back from sea;*
His arms went round tall Ursula's gown —
"What joy, O love, but thee?
Let us be wed in the good town,
*Now the Sword is back from sea!"*

My heart grew sick, no more afraid,
*When the Sword came back from sea;*
Upon the deck a tall white maid
Sat on Lord Roland's knee;
His chin was pressed upon her head,
*When the Sword came back from sea!* (1858)

## THE WIND

Ah! no, no, it is nothing, surely nothing at all,
Only the wild-going wind round by the garden-wall,
For the dawn just now is breaking, the wind beginning to fall.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

So I will sit, and think and think of the days gone by,
Never moving my chair for fear the dogs should cry,
Making no noise at all while the flambeau burns awry.
For my chair is heavy and carved, and with sweeping green behind
It is hung, and the dragons thereon grin out in the gusts of the wind;
On its folds an orange lies, with a deep gash cut in the rind.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

If I move my chair it will scream, and the orange will roll out far,
And the faint yellow juice ooze out like blood from a wizard's jar;
And the dogs will howl for those who went last month to the war.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

So I will sit and think of love that is over and past,
O! so long ago — yes, I will be quiet at last;
Whether I like it or not, a grim half-slumber is cast
Over my worn old brains, that touches the roots of my heart,
And above my half-shut eyes the blue roof 'gins to part,
And show the blue spring sky, till I am ready to start
From out of the green-hung chair; but something keeps me still,
And I fall in a dream that I walked with her on the side of a hill,
Dotted — for was it not spring? — with tufts of the daffodil.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

And Margaret, as she walked, held a painted book in her hand;
Her finger kept the place; I caught her; we both did stand
Face to face, on the top of the highest hill in the land.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

I held to her long bare arms, but she shuddered away from me,
While the flush went out of her face as her head fell back on a tree,
And a spasm caught her mouth, fearful for me to see;

And still I held to her arms till her shoulder touched my mail;
Weeping, she tottered forward, so glad that I should prevail,
And her hair went over my robe, like a gold flag over a sail.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

*The Wind.* This poem is spoken by a Norse knight who is haunted by visions of the past. Apparently crazed by unrequited love, he had killed his sweetheart. The carvings on the chair and the decorations on the hangings are meant to be indefinitely symbolical.

9. **flambeau,** a flaming torch.

I kissed her hard by the ear, and she kissed me on the brow,
And then lay down on the grass, where the mark on the moss is now,
And spread her arms out wide while I went down below.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

And then I walked for a space to and fro on the side of the hill,
Till I gathered and held in my arms great sheaves of the daffodil,
And when I came again my Margaret lay there still.

I piled them high and high above her heaving breast —
How they were caught and held in her loose ungirded vest!
But one beneath her arm died, happy so to be prest!
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

Again I turned my back and went away for an hour;
She said no word when I came again, so, flower by flower,
I counted the daffodils over, and cast them languidly lower.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

My dry hands shook and shook as the green gown showed again,
Cleared from the yellow flowers, and I grew hollow with pain,
And on to us both there fell from the sun-shower drops of rain.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*

Alas! alas! there was blood on the very quiet breast,
Blood lay in the many folds of the loose ungirded vest,
Blood lay upon her arm where the flower had been prest.

I shrieked and leapt from my chair, and the orange rolled out far,
The faint yellow juice oozed out like blood from a wizard's jar;
And then in marched the ghosts of those that had gone to the war.
I knew them by the arms that I was used to paint
Upon their long thin shields; but the colors were all grown faint,
And faint upon their banner was Olaf, king and saint.
*Wind, wind! thou art sad, art thou kind?*
*Wind, wind, unhappy! thou art blind,*
*Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.*
(1858)

## THE BLUE CLOSET

*The Damozels*

Lady Alice, Lady Louise,
Between the wash of the tumbling seas
We are ready to sing, if so ye please;
So lay your long hands on the keys;
Sing, "*Laudate pueri.*"

*And ever the great bell overhead*
*Boomed in the wind a knell for the dead,*
*Though no one tolled it, a knell for the dead.*

*Lady Louise*

Sister, let the measure swell
Not too loud; for you sing not well
If you drown the faint boom of the bell;
He is weary, so am I.

*And ever the chevron overhead*
*Flapped on the banner of the dead;*
*(Was he asleep, or was he dead?)*

*Lady Alice*

Alice the Queen, and Louise the Queen,
Two damozels wearing purple and green
Four lone ladies dwelling here
From day to day and year to year;
And there is none to let us go;
To break the locks of the doors below,
Or shovel away the heaped-up snow;
And when we die no man will know
That we are dead; but they give us leave,
Once every year on Christmas-eve,
To sing in the Closet Blue one song;
And we should be so long, so long,
If we dared, in singing; for dream on dream,

---

79. **I shrieked**, etc. The memory of the experience is so vivid that he shrieks.

84. **Olaf**, Olaf II (995-1030), king and patron saint of Norway.

*The Blue Closet.* This poem was written for a picture by Rossetti. It presents the story of Lady Louise, whose lover Arthur (line 66) had gone away wearing her token. He never returned except in the Lady's dreams when she and Lady Alice, with their two Damozels, were gathered in the Blue Closet once a year, on Christmas Eve. See Critical Notes.

5. **Laudate pueri**, Let the children praise. These are the opening words of a version of the famous church hymn *Te Deum* used in Ireland; it is found in the Bangor Antiphonary, dated 680-691. 13. **chevron**, a device of honor on a banner. Arthur's banner had been left in the Blue Closet.

They float on in a happy stream;
Float from the gold strings, float from the keys,
Float from the opened lips of Louise;
But, alas! the sea-salt oozes through
The chinks of the tiles of the Closet Blue;

*And ever the great bell overhead*
*Booms in the wind a knell for the dead,*
*The wind plays on it a knell for the dead.*

[*They sing all together*]

How long ago was it, how long ago,
He came to this tower with hands full of snow?
"Kneel down, O love Louise, kneel down," he said,
And sprinkled the dusty snow over my head.

He watched the snow melting, it ran through my hair,
Ran over my shoulders, white shoulders and bare.

"I cannot weep for thee, poor love Louise,
For my tears are all hidden deep under the seas;

"In a gold and blue casket she keeps all my tears,
But my eyes are no longer blue, as in old years;

"Yea, they grow gray with time, grow small and dry;
I am so feeble now, would I might die."

*And in truth the great bell overhead*
*Left off his pealing for the dead,*
*Perchance, because the wind was dead.*

Will he come back again, or is he dead?
Oh! is he sleeping, my scarf round his head?

Or did they strangle him as he lay there,
With the long scarlet scarf I used to wear?

Only I pray thee, Lord, let him come here!
Both his soul and his body to me are most dear.

Dear Lord, that loves me, I wait to receive
Either body or spirit this wild Christmas-eve.

*Through the floor shot up a lily red,*
*With a patch of earth from the land of the dead,*
*For he was strong in the land of the dead.*

What matter that his cheeks were pale,
His kind kissed lips all gray?
"O love Louise, have you waited long?"
"O my lord Arthur, yea."

What if his hair that brushed her cheek
Was stiff with frozen rime?
His eyes were grown quite blue again,
As in the happy time.

"O love Louise, this is the key
Of the happy golden land!
O sisters, cross the bridge with me,
My eyes are full of sand.
What matter that I cannot see,
If ye take me by the hand?"

*And ever the great bell overhead,*
*And the tumbling seas mourned for the dead;*
*For their song ceased, and they were dead.*

(1858)

## THE TUNE OF SEVEN TOWERS

No one goes there now;
For what is left to fetch away
From the desolate battlements all arow,
And the lead roof heavy and gray?
*"Therefore," said fair Yoland of the flowers,*
*"This is the tune of Seven Towers."*

No one walks there now,
Except in the white moonlight
The white ghosts walk in a row;
If one could see it, an awful sight —
*"Listen!" said fair Yoland of the flowers,*
*"This is the tune of Seven Towers."*

But none can see them now,
Though they sit by the side of the moat,
Feet half in the water, there in a row,
Long hair in the wind afloat.
*"Therefore," said fair Yoland of the flowers,*
*"This is the tune of Seven Towers."*

If any will go to it now,
He must go to it all alone,
Its gates will not open to any row
Of glittering spears — will *you* go alone?
*"Listen!" said fair Yoland of the flowers,*
*"This is the tune of Seven Towers."*

By my love go there now,
To fetch me my coif away,
My coif and my kirtle, with pearls arow,
Oliver, go today!
*"Therefore," said fair Yoland of the flowers,*
*"This is the tune of Seven Towers."*

*The Tune of Seven Towers.* 26. **coif**, a tight-fitting cap. 27. **kirtle**, a short skirt.

I am unhappy now,
I cannot tell you why;
If you go, the priests and I in a row
Will pray that you may not die.
*"Listen!" said fair Yoland of the flowers,*
*"This is the tune of Seven Towers."*

If you will go for me now,
I will kiss your mouth at last;
[*She sayeth inwardly.*]
(*The graves stand gray in a row*),
Oliver, hold me fast!
*"Therefore," said fair Yoland of the flowers,*
*"This is the tune of Seven Towers."* (1858)

## THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

Had she come all the way for this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slain
Beside the haystack in the floods?

Along the dripping, leafless woods,
The stirrup touching either shoe,
She rode astride as troopers do;
With kirtle kilted to her knee,
To which the mud splashed wretchedly;
And the wet dripped from every tree
Upon her head and heavy hair,
And on her eyelids broad and fair;
The tears and rain ran down her face.

By fits and starts they rode apace,
And very often was his place
Far off from her; he had to ride
Ahead, to see what might betide
When the roads crossed; and sometimes, when
There rose a murmuring from his men,
Had to turn back with promises.
Ah me! she had but little ease;
And often for pure doubt and dread
She sobbed, made giddy in the head
By the swift riding; while, for cold,
Her slender fingers scarce could hold
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
She felt the foot within her shoe
Against the stirrup; all for this,
To part at last without a kiss
Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they neared that old soaked hay,
They saw across the only way
That Judas, Godmar, and the three
Red running lions dismally
Grinned from his pennon, under which
In one straight line along the ditch,
They counted thirty heads.
So then
While Robert turned round to his men,
She saw at once the wretched end,
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her coif the wrong way from her head,
And hid her eyes; while Robert said,
"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one;
At Poictiers where we made them run
So fast — why, sweet my love, good cheer,
The Gascon frontier is so near,
Naught after us."
But "O!" she said,
"My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then
The court at Paris; those six men;
The gratings of the Chatelet;
The swift Seine on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by,
And laughing, while my weak hands try
To recollect how strong men swim.
All this, or else a life with him,
For which I should be damned at last;
Would God that this next hour were past!"

He answered not, but cried his cry,
"St. George for Marny!" cheerily;
And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again;
And, while for rage his thumb beat fast
Upon his sword-hilt, someone cast
About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
Your lover's life is on the wane
So fast, that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off;
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and scoff,
Sir Robert, or I slay you now."

She laid her hand upon her brow,
Then gazed upon the palm, as though

---

*The Haystack in the Floods.* In this poem Sir Robert de Marny, an English knight who had fought at Poictiers (1356), is riding through France with Jehane, his mistress, and a small company. They are confronted by Godmar, a traitorous French knight, who was waiting to slay Robert and carry off Jehane.

9. **kirtle kilted**, skirt tucked up.

36. **pennon**, banner. 42. **coif . . head.** The coif was a close-fitting cap tied under the chin. Jehane tried to pull her coif down over her eyes so that she might not see her lover slain. 45. **Poictiers.** At the Battle of Poictiers the French outnumbered the English five to one, but the English won. 47. **Gascon frontier.** Robert would be safe in the province of Gascony, since during the reign of Edward III of England (1327-77) Gascony was English territory. 51. **those six men**, the judges who would try her as a witch and imprison her in the Grand Chatêlet, the most terrible of the Paris prisons. She would be flung into the Seine to test her guilt—if she swam she would be declared guilty; if she drowned she was innocent. 61. **St. George for Marny.** St. George was the patron saint of the English. Marny is Robert.

She thought her forehead bled, and "No!"
She said, and turned her head away,
As there was nothing else to say,
And everything was settled; red
Grew Godmar's face from chin to head —
"Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
My castle, guarding well my lands;
What hinders me from taking you,
And doing that I list to do
To your fair willful body, while
Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile
Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
A long way out she thrust her chin:
"You know that I should strangle you
While you were sleeping; or bite through
Your throat, by God's help; ah!" she said,
"Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
For in such wise they hem me in,
I cannot choose but sin and sin,
Whatever happens; yet I think
They could not make me eat or drink,
And so should I just reach my rest."

"Nay, if you do not my behest,
O Jehane! though I love you well,"
Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
All that I know?" "Foul lies," she said.
"Eh? lies, my Jehane? by God's head,
At Paris folks would deem them true!
Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you:
'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
Give us Jehane to burn or drown!
Eh! — gag me Robert! — sweet my friend,
This were indeed a piteous end
For those long fingers, and long feet,
And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;
An end that few men would forget
That saw it. So, an hour yet —
Consider, Jehane, which to take
Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,
Dismounting, did she leave that place,
And totter some yards; with her face
Turned upward to the sky she lay,
Her head on a wet heap of hay,
And fell asleep; and while she slept,
And did not dream, the minutes crept
Round to the twelve again; but she,
Being waked at last, sighed quietly,
And strangely childlike came, and said:
"I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,
As though it hung on strong wires, turned
Most sharply round, and his face burned.

For Robert, both his eyes were dry —
He could not weep—but gloomily
He seemed to watch the rain; yea, too,
His lips were firm; he tried once more
To touch her lips; she reached out, sore
And vain desire so tortured them,
The poor gray lips, and now the hem
Of his sleeve brushed them.

With a start
Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;
From Robert's throat he loosed the bands
Of silk and mail; with empty hands
Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw,
The long bright blade without a flaw
Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand
In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
Back Robert's head; she saw him send
The thin steel down; the blow told well —
Right backward the knight Robert fell,
And moaned as dogs do, being half dead,
Unwitting, as I deem; so then
Godmar turned grinning to his men,
Who ran, some five or six, and beat
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turned again and said:
"So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!
Take note, my lady, that your way
Lies backward to the Chatelet!"
She shook her head and gazed awhile
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had
Beside the haystack in the floods.
(1858)

## TWO RED ROSES ACROSS THE MOON

There was a lady lived in a hall,
Large of her eyes and slim and tall;
And ever she sung from noon to noon,
*Two red roses across the moon.*

There was a knight came riding by
In early spring, when the roads were dry;
And he heard that lady sing at the noon,
*Two red roses across the moon.*

Yet none the more he stopped at all,
But he rode a-gallop past the hall;
And left that lady singing at noon,
*Two red roses across the moon.*

Because, forsooth, the battle was set,
And the scarlet and blue had got to be met,
He rode on the spur till the next warm noon;
*Two red roses across the moon.*

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153. **fitte**, a division of a poem, song, or story.

But the battle was scattered from hill to hill,
From the windmill to the watermill;
And he said to himself, as it neared the noon,
*Two red roses across the moon.*

You scarce could see for the scarlet and blue,
A golden helm or a golden shoe;
So he cried, as the fight grew thick at the noon,
*Two red roses across the moon!*

Verily then the gold bore through
The huddled spears of the scarlet and blue;
And they cried, as they cut them down at the noon,
*Two red roses across the moon!*

I trow he stopped when he rode again
By the hall, though draggled sore with the rain;
And his lips were pinched to kiss at the noon
*Two red roses across the moon.*

Under the may she stooped to the crown;
All was gold, there was nothing of brown,
And the horns blew up in the hall at noon,
*Two red roses across the moon.* (1858)

## SIR GILES'S WAR-SONG

*Ho! is there any will ride with me,*
*Sir Giles, le bon des barrières?*

The clink of arms is good to hear,
The flap of pennons fair to see;
*Ho! is there any will ride with me,*
*Sir Giles, le bon des barrières?*

The leopards and lilies are fair to see;
St. George Guienne! right good to hear;
*Ho! is there any will ride with me;*
*Sir Giles, le bon des barrières?*

I stood by the barrier,
My coat being blazoned fair to see;
*Ho! is there any will ride with me,*
*Sir Giles, le bon des barrières?*

Clisson put out his head to see,
And lifted his basnet up to hear;
I pulled him through the bars to ME,
*Sir Giles, le bon des barrières.*

(1858)

## NEAR AVALON

A ship with shields before the sun,
Six maidens round the mast,
A red-gold crown on every one,
A green gown on the last.

The fluttering green banners there
Are wrought with ladies' heads most fair,
And a portraiture of Guenevere
The middle of each sail doth bear.

A ship which sails before the wind,
And round the helm six knights,
Their heaumes are on, whereby, half blind,
They pass by many sights.

The tattered scarlet banners there,
Right soon will leave the spear-heads bare,
Those six knights sorrowfully bear,
In all their heaumes some yellow hair. (1858)

## PRAISE OF MY LADY

My lady seems of ivory
Forehead, straight nose, and cheeks that be
Hollowed a little mournfully.
*Beata mea Domina!*

Her forehead, overshadowed much
By bows of hair, has a wave such
As God was good to make for me.
*Beata mea Domina!*

Not greatly long my lady's hair,
Nor yet with yellow color fair,
But thick and crispéd wonderfully;
*Beata mea Domina!*

Heavy to make the pale face sad,
And dark, but dead as though it had
Been forged by God most wonderfully
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

Of some strange metal, thread by thread,
To stand out from my lady's head,
Not moving much to tangle me.
*Beata mea Domina!*

Beneath her brows the lids fall slow,
The lashes a clear shadow throw

---

33. **may**, hawthorn.

*Sir Giles's War-Song.* 2. **le bon des barrières**, the good one of the lists. 7. **leopards and lilies**, Sir Giles's device. 8. **St. George Guienne.** St. George was the patron saint of England. Guienne, a province in southern France, was English territory during the reign of Edward III (1327-77). 12. **blazoned**, adorned. 16. **basnet**, a light steel helmet.

*Near Avalon.* In medieval romance, Avalon was an ocean island, the earthly paradise, where, according to legend, Arthur is waiting to return. The poem symbolizes the hopeless love of knights for gay maidens.

11. **heaumes**, helmets. 16. **yellow hair**, a love token. Most ladies of romance had golden hair.

*Praise of My Lady.* The details in this poem fit almost exactly Rossetti's portrait of Jane Burden, whom Morris married in 1859. Morris and Rossetti had met her at Oxford in 1856.

4. **Beata mea Domina**, my blessed lady. 11. **crispéd**, curled.

Where I would wish my lips to be.
*Beata mea Domina!*

Her great eyes, standing far apart,
Draw up some memory from her heart,
And gaze out very mournfully
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

So beautiful and kind they are,
But most times looking out afar,
Waiting for something, not for me.
*Beata mea Domina!*

I wonder if the lashes long
Are those that do her bright eyes wrong,
For always half tears seem to be
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

Lurking below the underlid,
Darkening the place where they lie hid —
If they should rise and flow for me!
*Beata mea Domina!*

Her full lips being made to kiss,
Curled up and pensive each one is;
This makes me faint to stand and see.
*Beata mea Domina!*

Her lips are not contented now,
Because the hours pass so slow
Toward a sweet time (pray for me),
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

Nay, hold thy peace! for who can tell;
But this at least I know full well,
Her lips are parted longingly,
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

So passionate and swift to move,
To pluck at any flying love,
That I grow faint to stand and see.
*Beata mea Domina!*

Yea! there beneath them is her chin,
So fine and round, it were a sin
To feel no weaker when I see
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

God's dealings; for with so much care
And troublous, faint lines wrought in there,
He finishes her face for me.
*Beata mea Domina!*

Of her long neck what shall I say?
What things about her body's sway,
Like a knight's pennon or slim tree
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

Set gently waving in the wind;
Or her long hands that I may find
On some day sweet to move o'er me?
*Beata mea Domina!*

God pity me though, if I missed
The telling, how along her wrist
The veins creep, dying languidly
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

Inside her tender palm and thin,
Now give me pardon, dear, wherein
My voice is weak and vexes thee.
*Beata mea Domina!*

All men that see her any time,
I charge you straightly in this rime,
What, and wherever you may be,
— *Beata mea Domina!* —

To kneel before her; as for me,
I choke and grow quite faint to see
My lady moving graciously.
*Beata mea Domina!* (*1857;* 1858)

## IN PRISON

Wearily, drearily,
Half the day long,
Flap the great banners
High over the stone;
Strangely and eerily
Sounds the wind's song,
Bending the banner-poles.

While, all alone,
Watching the loophole's spark,
Lie I, with life all dark,
Feet tethered, hands fettered
Fast to the stone,
The grim wall, square lettered
With prisoned men's groan.

Still strain the banner-poles
Through the wind's song
Westward the banner roll
Over my wrong.

(1858)

## From *THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON*

### O Bitter Sea

O bitter sea, tumultuous sea,
Full many an ill is wrought by thee! —
Unto the wasters of the land
Thou holdest out thy wrinkled hand;
And when they leave the conquered town,
Whose black smoke makes thy surges brown,
Driven betwixt thee and the sun,

---

*The Life and Death of Jason.* See Critical Notes.
*O Bitter Sea.* This lyric, in Book 4, is sung by Orpheus, the famous musician, as the ship *Argos* moves out into the sea on its journey from the shore of Thessaly, Greece.

As the long day of blood is done,
From many a league of glittering waves
Thou smilest on them and their slaves.
The thin bright-eyed Phœnician
Thou drawest to thy waters wan;
With ruddy eve and golden morn
Thou temptest him, until, forlorn,
Unburied, under alien skies
Cast up ashore his body lies.
Yea, whoso sees thee from his door,
Must ever long for more and more;
Nor will the beechen bowl suffice,
Or homespun robe of little price,
Or hood well-woven of the fleece
Undyed, or unspiced wine of Greece;
So sore his heart is set upon
Purple, and gold, and cinnamon;
For as thou cravest, so he craves,
Until he rolls beneath thy waves.
Nor in some landlocked, unknown bay,
Can satiate thee for one day.

Now, therefore, O thou bitter sea,
With no long words we pray to thee,
But ask thee, hast thou felt before
Such strokes of the long ashen oar?
And hast thou yet seen such a prow
Thy rich and niggard waters plow?
Nor yet, O sea, shalt thou be cursed,
If at thy hands we gain the worst,
And, wrapped in water, roll about
Blind-eyed, unheeding song or shout,
Within thine eddies far from shore,
Warmed by no sunlight any more.
Therefore, indeed, we joy in thee,
And praise thy greatness, and will we
Take at thy hands both good and ill,
Yea, what thou wilt, and praise thee still,
Enduring not to sit at home,
And wait until the last days come,
When we no more may care to hold
White bosoms under crowns of gold,
And our dulled hearts no longer are
Stirred by the clangorous noise of war,
And hope within our souls is dead,
And no joy is rememberéd.
So, if thou hast a mind to slay,
Fair prize thou hast of us today;
And if thou hast a mind to save,
Great praise and honor shalt thou have;
But whatso thou wilt do with us,
Our end shall not be piteous,
Because our memories shall live
When folk forget the way to drive
The black keel through the heaped-up sea,
And half dried up thy waters be.

(1867)

### A Garden by the Sea

I know a little garden close
Set thick with lily and red rose,
Where I would wander if I might
From dewy dawn to dewy night,
And have one with me wandering.

And though within it no birds sing,
And though no pillared house is there,
And though the apple boughs are bare
Of fruit and blossom, would to God,
Her feet upon the green grass trod,
And I beheld them as before.

There comes a murmur from the shore,
And in the close two fair streams are,
Drawn from the purple hills afar,
Drawn down unto the restless sea:
Dark hills whose heath-bloom feeds no bee,
Dark shore no ship has ever seen,
Still beaten by the billows green,
Whose murmur comes unceasingly
Unto the place for which I cry.

For which I cry both day and night,
For which I let slip all delight,
That maketh me both deaf and blind,
Careless to win, unskilled to find,
And quick to lose what all men seek.

Yet tottering as I am, and weak,
Still have I left a little breath
To seek within the jaws of death
An entrance to that happy place,
To seek the unforgotten face
Once seen, once kissed, once reft from me
Anigh the murmuring of the sea. (1867)

### O Death, That Maketh Life so Sweet

O death, that makest life so sweet,
O fear, with mirth before thy feet,
What have ye yet in store for us,
The conquerors, the glorious?
Men say: "For fear that thou shouldst die
Tomorrow, let today pass by
Flower-crowned and singing"; yet have we
Passed our today upon the sea,
Or in a poisonous unknown land,
With fear and death on either hand,
And listless when the day was done

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11. **Phœnician**, a native of Phœnicia, along the coast of Asia Minor. The Phœnicians were noted for their commerce.

*A Garden by The Sea.* This lyric, in Book 4, is the "sweet song sung not yet to any man" by the water-nymph as she lulls to sleep the Theban youth Hylas. He had wandered away from his companions who had landed on the shore of Mysia, Asia Minor, in search of fresh water. Hylas was left behind by his companions.

1. close, enclosure.

*O Death, That Maketh Life So Sweet.* This song, in Book 12, is sung by Orpheus to inspire his comrades on their homeward voyage after a hard winter passed on the shore of a northern river; they are tossing upon the Atlantic near the Pillars of Hercules (Strait of Gibraltar).

Have scarcely hoped to see the sun
Dawn on the morrow of the earth,
Nor in our hearts have thought of mirth.
And while the world lasts, scarce again
Shall any sons of men bear pain
Like we have borne, yet be alive.
So surely not in vain we strive
Like other men for our reward;
Sweet peace and deep, the checkered sward
Beneath the ancient mulberry trees,
The smooth-paved gilded palaces,
Where the shy thin-clad damsels sweet
Make music with their gold-ringed feet,
The fountain court amidst of it,
Where the short-haired slave-maidens sit,
While on the veinéd pavement lie
The honeyed things and spicery
Their arms have borne from out the town.
The dancers on the thymy down
In summer twilight, when the earth
Is still of all things but their mirth,
And echoes borne upon the wind
Of others in like way entwined.
The merchant-town's fair market-place,
Where over many a changing face
The pigeons of the temple flit,
And still the outland merchants sit
Like kings above their merchandise,
Lying to foolish men and wise.
Ah! if they heard that we were come
Into the bay, and bringing home
That which all men have talked about,
Some men with rage, and some with doubt,
Some with desire, and some with praise;
Then would the people throng the ways,
Nor heed the outland merchandise,
Nor any talk, from fools or wise,
But tales of our accomplished quest.
What soul within the house shall rest
When we come home? The wily king
Shall leave his throne to see the thing;
No man shall keep the landward gate;
The hurried traveler shall wait
Until our bulwarks graze the quay;
Unslain the milk-white bull shall be
Beside the quivering altar-flame;
Scarce shall the maiden clasp for shame
Over her breast the raiment thin,
The morn that *Argo* cometh in.
Then cometh happy life again
That payeth well our toil and pain
In that sweet hour, when all our woe
But as a pensive tale we know,
Nor yet remember deadly fear;
For surely now if death be near,
Unthought-of is it, and unseen
When sweet is, that hath bitter been.

(1867)

## From *THE EARTHLY PARADISE*

### AN APOLOGY

Of Heaven or Hell I have no power to sing;
I cannot ease the burden of your fears,
Or make quick-coming death a little thing,
Or bring again the pleasure of past years;
Nor for my words shall ye forget your tears,
Or hope again for aught that I can say —
The idle singer of an empty day.

But rather, when aweary of your mirth,
From full hearts still unsatisfied ye sigh,
And, feeling kindly unto all the earth,
Grudge every minute as it passes by,
Made the more mindful that the sweet days die —
Remember me a little then, I pray,
The idle singer of an empty day.

The heavy trouble, the bewildering care
That weighs us down who live and earn our bread,
These idle verses have no power to bear;
So let me sing of names rememberéd,
Because they, living not, can ne'er be dead,
Or long time take their memory quite away
From us poor singers of an empty day.

Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
Let it suffice me that my murmuring rime,
Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
Telling a tale not too importunate
To those who in the sleepy region stay,
Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Folk say, a wizard to a northern king
At Christmas-tide such wondrous things did show,
That through one window men beheld the spring,
And through another saw the summer glow,
And through a third the fruited vines a-row,
While still, unheard, but in its wonted way,
Piped the drear wind of that December day.

So with this Earthly Paradise it is,
If ye will read aright, and pardon me,
Who strive to build a shadowy isle of bliss
Midmost the beating of the steely sea,
Where tossed about all hearts of men must be;

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43. **That . . . about**, the Golden Fleece. 60. **Argo**, the name of their ship, from which they were called Argonauts.

*The Earthly Paradise.* See Critical Notes.

*An Apology.* 1. **Of Heaven or Hell.** Morris disclaims equality with earlier poets who used these themes—Virgil, Dante, Milton. 25. **the ivory gate.** The house of Morpheus, god of sleep, had two gates through which dreams issued. True dreams passed through a gate of horn; false dreams, through a gate of ivory.

Whose ravening monsters mighty men shall slay —
Not the poor singer of an empty day.

(1868-1870)

## JUNE

O June, O June, that we desired so,
Wilt thou not make us happy on this day?
Across the river thy soft breezes blow,
Sweet with the scent of beanfields far away;
Above our heads rustle the aspens gray;
Calm is the sky with harmless clouds beset —
No thought of storm the morning vexes yet.

See, we have left our hopes and fears behind
To give our very hearts up unto thee;
What better place than this, then, could we find
By this sweet stream that knows not of the sea,
That guesses not the city's misery —
This little stream whose hamlets scarce have names,
This far-off, lonely mother of the Thames?

Here then, O June, thy kindness will we take;
And if indeed but pensive men we seem,
What should we do? Thou wouldst not have us wake
From out the arms of this rare happy dream
And wish to leave the murmur of the stream,
The rustling boughs, the twitter of the birds,
And all thy thousand peaceful happy words.

(1868)

## THE LADY OF THE LAND

*Argument:* A certain man, having landed on an island in the Greek Sea, found there a beautiful damsel, whom he fain would have delivered from a strange and dreadful doom, but failing herein, he died soon afterwards.

It happened once, some men of Italy
Midst the Greek Islands went a sea-roving,
And much good fortune had they on the sea:
Of many a man they had the ransoming,
And many a chain they gat, and goodly thing;
And midst their voyage to an isle they came,
Whereof my story keepeth not the name.

Now though but little was there left to gain,
Because the richer folk had gone away,
Yet since, by this, of water they were fain,
They came to anchor in a land-locked bay,
Whence in a while some went ashore to play,
Going but lightly armed in twos or threes,
For midst that folk they feared no enemies.

And of these fellows that thus went ashore,
One was there who left all his friends behind;
Who going inland ever more and more,
And being left quite alone, at last did find
A lonely valley sheltered from the wind,
Wherein, amidst an ancient cypress wood,
A long-deserted ruined castle stood.

The wood, once ordered in fair grove and glade,
With gardens overlooked by terraces,
And marble-pavéd pools for pleasure made,
Was tangled now, and choked with fallen trees;
And he who went there, with but little ease
Must stumble by the stream's side, once made meet
For tender women's dainty wandering feet.

The raven's croak, the low wind choked and drear,
The baffled stream, the gray wolf's doleful cry,
Were all the sounds that mariner could hear,
As through the wood he wandered painfully;
But as unto the house he drew anigh,
The pillars of a ruined shrine he saw,
The once fair temple of a fallen law.

No image was there left behind to tell
Before whose face the knees of men had bowed;
An altar of black stone, of old wrought well,
Alone beneath a ruined roof now showed
The goal whereto the folk were wont to crowd,
Seeking for things forgotten long ago,
Praying for heads long ages laid a-low.

Close to the temple was the castle-gate,
Doorless and crumbling; there our fellow turned,
Trembling indeed at what might chance to wait,
The prey entrapped, yet with a heart that burned
To know the most of what might there be learned,
And hoping somewhat too, amid his fear,
To light on such things as all men hold dear.

Noble the house was, nor seemed built for war,
But rather like the work of other days,

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*The Lady of the Land.* This is the eighth story of the cycle. Cf. Browning's *Muckle-Mouth Meg*, page 355. The source of the poem is found in Book 4 of John Maundeville's *Voiage and Travaile.* See Critical Notes.

35. **law**, belief, religion.

When men, in better peace than now they are,
Had leisure on the world around to gaze,
And noted well the past times' changing ways;
And fair with sculptured stories it was wrought,
By lapse of time unto dim ruin brought.

Now as he looked about on all these things,
And strove to read the moldering histories,
Above the door an image with wise wings,
Whose unclad limbs a serpent seemed to seize,
He dimly saw, although the western breeze,
And years of biting frost and washing rain,
Had made the carver's labor wellnigh vain.

But this, though perished sore, and worn away,
He noted well, because it seemed to be,
After the fashion of another day,
Some great man's badge of war, or armory,
And round it a carved wreath he seemed to see;
But taking note of these things, at the last
The mariner beneath the gateway passed.

And there a lovely cloistered court he found,
A fountain in the midst, o'erthrown and dry,
And in the cloister briers twining round
The slender shafts; the wondrous imagery
Outworn by more than many years gone by,
Because the country people, in their fear
Of wizardry, had wrought destruction here;

And piteously these fair things had been maimed —
There stood great Jove, lacking his head of might;
Here was the archer, swift Apollo, lamed;
The shapely limbs of Venus hid from sight
By weeds and shards; Diana's ankles light
Bound with the cable of some coasting ship;
And rusty nails through Helen's maddening lip.

Therefrom unto the chambers did he pass,
And found them fair still, midst of their decay,
Though in them now no sign of man there was,
And everything but stone had passed away
That made them lovely in that vanished day;
Nay, the mere walls themselves would soon be gone
And naught be left but heaps of moldering stone.

But he, when all the place he had gone o'er,
And with much trouble clomb the broken stair,
And from the topmost turret seen the shore
And his good ship drawn up at anchor there,
Came down again, and found a crypt most fair,
Built wonderfully beneath the greatest hall;
And there he saw a door within the wall,

Well-hinged, close-shut; nor was there in that place
Another on its hinges — therefore he
Stood there and pondered for a little space,
And thought, "Perchance some marvel I shall see,
For surely here some dweller there must be,
Because this door seems whole, and new, and sound,
While naught but ruin I can see around."

So with that word, moved by a strong desire,
He tried the hasp, that yielded to his hand,
And in a strange place, lit as by a fire
Unseen but near, he presently did stand;
And by an odorous breeze his face was fanned,
As though in some Arabian plain he stood,
Anigh the border of a spice-tree wood.

He moved not for a while, but looking round,
He wondered much to see the place so fair,
Because, unlike the castle above ground,
No pillager or wrecker had been there;
It seemed that time had passed on otherwhere,
Nor laid a finger on this hidden place,
Rich with the wealth of some forgotten race.

With hangings, fresh as when they left the loom,
The walls were hung a space above the head;
Slim ivory chairs were set about the room;
And in one corner was a dainty bed,
That seemed for some fair queen appareléd;
And marble was the worst stone of the floor,
That with rich Indian webs was covered o'er.

The wanderer trembled when he saw all this,
Because he deemed by magic it was wrought;
Yet in his heart a longing for some bliss,
Whereof the hard and changing world knows naught,

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79. **Jove**, ruler of the gods. 80. **Apollo**, god of manly youth and beauty, of poetry and music. His attributes were the bow and the lyre. 81. **Venus**, goddess of love. 82. **Diana**, goddess of the moon and of the chase. 84. **Helen**, Helen of Troy (see note on *A Dream of Fair Women*, line 85, page 32).

Arose and urged him on, and dimmed the thought
That there perchance some devil lurked to slay
The heedless wanderer from the light of day.

Over against him was another door
Set in the wall; so, casting fear aside,
With hurried steps he crossed the varied floor,
And there again the silver latch he tried,
And with no pain the door he opened wide,
And entering the new chamber cautiously
The glory of great heaps of gold could see.

Upon the floor uncounted medals lay,
Like things of little value; here and there
Stood golden caldrons, that might well outweigh
The biggest midst an emperor's copper-ware,
And golden cups were set on tables fair,
Themselves of gold; and in all hollow things
Were stored great gems, worthy the crowns of kings.

The walls and roof with gold were overlaid,
And precious raiment from the wall hung down;
The fall of kings that treasure might have stayed,
Or gained some longing conqueror great renown,
Or built again some god-destroyed old town;
What wonder, if this plunderer of the sea
Stood gazing at it long and dizzily?

But at the last his troubled eyes and dazed
He lifted from the glory of that gold,
And then the image, that, wellnigh erased,
Over the castle-gate he did behold,
Above a door well wrought in colored gold
Again he saw — a naked girl with wings
Enfolded in a serpent's scaly rings.

And even as his eyes were fixed on it
A woman's voice came from the other side,
And through his heart strange hopes began to flit
That in some wondrous land he might abide
Not dying, master of a deathless bride;
So o'er the gold he scarcely now could see
He went, and passed this last door eagerly.

Then in a room he stood wherein there was
A marble bath, whose brimming water yet
Was scarcely still; a vessel of green glass
Half full of odorous ointment was there set
Upon the topmost step that still was wet,
And jeweled shoes and women's dainty gear,
Lay cast upon the varied pavement near.

In one quick glance these things his eyes did see,
But speedily they turned round to behold
Another sight, for throned on ivory
There sat a girl, whose dripping tresses rolled
On to the floor in waves of gleaming gold,
Cast back from such a form as, erewhile shown
To one poor shepherd, lighted up Troy town.

Naked she was; the kisses of her feet
Upon the floor a dying path had made
From the full bath unto her ivory seat;
In her right hand, upon her bosom laid,
She held a golden comb; a mirror weighed
Her left hand down; aback her fair head lay,
Dreaming, awake, of some long vanished day.

Her eyes were shut, but she seemed not to sleep;
Her lips were murmuring things unheard and low,
Or sometimes twitched as though she needs must weep
Though from her eyes the tears refused to flow;
And oft with heavenly red her cheek did glow,
As if remembrance of some half-sweet shame
Across the web of many memories came.

There stood the man, scarce daring to draw breath
For fear the lovely sight should fade away;
Forgetting heaven, forgetting life and death,
Trembling for fear lest something he should say
Unwitting, lest some sob should yet betray
His presence there, for to his eager eyes
Already did the tears begin to rise.

But as he gazed, she moved, and with a sigh
Bent forward, dropping down her golden head;
"Alas, alas! another day gone by,
Another day and no soul come," she said;
"Another year, and still I am not dead!"
And with that word once more her head she raised,
And on the trembling man with great eyes gazed.

Then he imploring hands to her did reach,
And toward her very slowly 'gan to move
And with wet eyes her pity did beseech,
And seeing her about to speak, he strove

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182. **shepherd . . . town**, a reference to Paris and Helen of Troy. See *Œnone* and notes, page 20.

From trembling lips to utter words of love;
And with a look she stayed his doubtful feet,
And made sweet music as their eyes did meet.

For now she spoke in gentle voice and clear,
Using the Greek tongue that he knew full well:
"What man art thou, that thus hast wandered here,
And found this lonely chamber where I dwell?
Beware, beware! for I have many a spell;
If greed of power and gold have led thee on,
Not lightly shall this untold wealth be won.

"But if thou com'st here, knowing of my tale,
In hope to bear away my body fair,
Stout must thine heart be, nor shall that avail
If thou a wicked heart in thee dost bear;
So once again I bid thee to beware,
Because no base man things like this may see,
And live thereafter long and happily."

"Lady," he said, "in Florence is my home,
And in my city noble is my name;
Neither on peddling voyage am I come,
But, like my fathers, bent to gather fame;
And though thy face has set my heart a-flame,
Yet of thy story nothing do I know,
But here have wandered heedlessly enow.

"But since the sight of thee mine eyes did bless,
What can I be but thine? what wouldst thou have?
From those thy words, I deem from some distress
By deeds of mine thy dear life I might save;
Oh, then, delay not! if one ever gave
His life to any, mine I give to thee;
Come, tell me what the price of love must be? —

"Swift death, to be with thee a day and night
And with the earliest dawning to be slain?
Or better, a long year of great delight,
And many years of misery and pain?
Or worse, and this poor hour for all my gain?
A sorry merchant am I on this day;
E'en as thou willest, so must I obey."

She said, "What brave words! Naught divine am I,
But an unhappy and unheard-of maid,
Compelled by evil fate and destiny
To live, who long ago should have been laid
Under the earth within the cypress shade.
Hearken awhile, and quickly shalt thou know
What deed I pray thee to accomplish now.

"God grant indeed thy words are not for naught!
Then shalt thou save me, since for many a day
To such a dreadful life I have been brought.
Nor will I spare with all my heart to pay
What man soever takes my grief away;
Ah! I will love thee, if thou lovest me
But well enough my savior now to be.

"My father lived a many years agone,
Lord of this land, master of all cunning,
Who ruddy gold could draw from out gray stone,
And gather wealth from many an uncouth thing;
He made the wilderness rejoice and sing,
And such a leech he was that none could say
Without his word what soul should pass away.

"Unto Diana such a gift he gave,
Goddess above, below, and on the earth,
That I should be her virgin and her slave
From the first hour of my most wretched birth;
Therefore my life had known but little mirth
When I had come unto my twentieth year
And the last time of hallowing drew anear.

"So in her temple had I lived and died
And all would long ago have passed away,
But ere that time came, did strange things betide,
Whereby I am alive unto this day;
Alas, the bitter words that I must say!
Ah! can I bring my wretched tongue to tell
How I was brought unto this fearful hell?

"A queen I was; what gods I knew I loved,
And nothing evil was there in my thought,
And yet by love my wretched heart was moved
Until to utter ruin I was brought!
Alas! thou sayest our gods were vain and naught;
Wait, wait, till thou hast heard this tale of mine —
Then shalt thou think them devilish or divine.

"Hearken! in spite of father and of vow,
I loved a man; but for that sin I think
Men had forgiven me — yea, yea, even thou;
But from the gods the full cup must I drink,
And into misery unheard of sink,
Tormented, when their own names are forgot,
And men must doubt e'er if they lived or not.

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238. **enow**, enough. 257. **cypress shade.** The cypress, a tree common in cemeteries, is an emblem of mourning.

"Glorious my lover was unto my sight,
Most beautiful — of love we grew so fain
That we at last agreed that on a night
We should be happy, but that he were slain
Or shut in hold; and neither joy nor pain
Should else forbid that hoped-for time to be;
So came the night that made a wretch of me.

"Ah! well do I remember all that night,
When through the window shone the orb of June,
And by the bed flickered the taper's light,
Whereby I trembled, gazing at the moon;
Ah me! the meeting that we had, when soon
Into his strong, well-trusted arms I fell,
And many a sorrow we began to tell.

"Ah me! what parting on that night we had!
I think the story of my great despair
A little while might merry folk make sad;
For, as he swept away my yellow hair
To make my shoulder and my bosom bare,
I raised mine eyes, and shuddering could behold
A shadow cast upon the bed of gold;

"Then suddenly was quenched my hot desire,
And he untwined his arms; the moon, so pale
A while ago, seemed changed to blood and fire,
And yet my limbs beneath me did not fail,
And neither had I strength to cry or wail,
But stood there helpless, bare, and shivering,
With staring eyes still fixed upon the thing.

"Because the shade that on the bed of gold
The changed and dreadful moon was throwing down
Was of Diana, whom I did behold,
With knotted hair, and shining girt-up gown,
And on the high white brow, a deadly frown
Bent upon us, who stood scarce drawing breath,
Striving to meet the horrible sure death,

"No word at all the dreadful goddess said,
But soon across my feet my lover lay,
And well indeed I knew that he was dead;
And would that I had died on that same day!
For in a while the image turned away,
And without words my doom I understood,
And felt a horror change my human blood.

"And there I fell, and on the floor I lay
By the dead man, till daylight came on me,
And not a word thenceforward could I say
For three years; till of grief and misery,
The lingering pest, the cruel enemy,
My father and his folk were dead and gone,
And in this castle I was left alone.

"And then the doom foreseen upon me fell,
For Queen Diana did my body change
Into a fork-tongued dragon flesh and fell,
And through the island nightly do I range,
Or in the green sea mate with monsters strange,
When in the middle of the moonlit night
The sleepy mariner I do affright.

"But all day long upon this gold I lie,
Within this place, where never mason's hand
Smote trowel on the marble noisily;
Drowsy I lie, no folk at my command,
Who once was called the Lady of the Land;
Who might have bought a kingdom with a kiss,
Yea, half the world with such a sight as this."

And therewithal, with rosy fingers light,
Backward her heavy-hanging hair she threw,
To give her naked beauty more to sight;
But when, forgetting all the things he knew,
Maddened with love unto the prize he drew,
She cried, "Nay, wait! for wherefore wilt thou die;
Why should we not be happy, thou and I?

"Wilt thou not save me? Once in every year
This rightful form of mine that thou dost see
By favor of the goddess have I here
From sunrise unto sunset given me,
That some brave man may end my misery.
And thou — art thou not brave? can thy heart fail,
Whose eyes e'en now are weeping at my tale?

"Then listen! when this day is overpast,
A fearful monster shall I be again,
And thou mayst be my savior at the last —
Unless, once more, thy words are naught and vain.
If thou of love and sovereignty art fain,
Come thou next morn, and when thou seest here
A hideous dragon, have thereof no fear.

"But take the loathsome head up in thine hands,
And kiss it, and be master presently
Of twice the wealth that is in all the lands,
From Cathay to the head of Italy;
And master also, if it pleaseth thee,
Of all thou praisest as so fresh and bright,
Of what thou callest crown of all delight.

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353. **flesh and fell,** body and skin. 389. **Cathay,** a poetic name for China; used vaguely during the Middle Ages for regions in the Far East.

"Ah! with what joy then shall I see again
The sunlight on the green grass and the trees,
And hear the clatter of the summer rain,
And see the joyous folk beyond the seas;
Ah, me! to hold my child upon my knees,
After the weeping of unkindly tears,
And all the wrongs of these four hundred years.

"Go now, go quick! leave this gray heap of stone;
And from thy glad heart think upon thy way,
How I shall love thee — yea, love thee alone,
That bringest me from dark death unto day;
For this shall be thy wages and thy pay;
Unheard-of wealth, unheard-of love is near,
If thou hast heart a little dread to bear."

Therewith she turned to go; but he cried out,
"Ah! wilt thou leave me then without one kiss,
To slay the very seeds of fear and doubt,
That glad tomorrow may bring certain bliss?
Hast thou forgotten how love lives by this,
The memory of some hopeful close embrace,
Low whispered words within some lonely place?"

But she, when his bright glittering eyes she saw,
And burning cheeks, cried out, "Alas, alas!
Must I be quite undone, and wilt thou draw
A worse fate on me than the first one was?
Oh, haste thee from this fatal place to pass!
Yet, ere thou goest, take this, lest thou shouldst deem
Thou hast been fooled by some strange mid-day dream."

So saying, blushing like a new-kissed maid,
From off her neck a little gem she drew,
That, 'twixt those snowy rose-tinged hillocks laid,
The secrets of her glorious beauty knew;
And ere he well perceived what she would do,
She touched his hand, the gem within it lay,
And, turning, from his sight she fled away.

Then at the doorway where her rosy heel
Had glanced and vanished, he awhile did stare,
And still upon his hand he seemed to feel
The varying kisses of her fingers fair;
Then turned he toward the dreary crypt and bare,
And dizzily throughout the castle passed,
Till by the ruined fane he stood at last.

Then weighing still the gem within his hand,
He stumbled backward though the cypress wood,
Thinking the while of some strange lovely land,
Where all his life should be most fair and good
Till on the valley's wall of hills he stood,
And slowly thence passed down unto the bay
Red with the death of that bewildering day.

The next day came, and he, who all the night
Had ceaselessly been turning in his bed,
Arose and clad himself in armor bright,
And many a danger he rememberéd —
Storming of towns, lone sieges full of dread,
That with renown his heart had borne him through —
And this thing seemed a little thing to do.

So on he went, and on the way he thought
Of all the glorious things of yesterday,
Naught of the price whereat they must be bought,
But ever to himself did softly say,
"No roaming now, my wars are passed away;
No long dull days devoid of happiness,
When such a love my yearning heart shall bless."

Thus to the castle did he come at last,
But when unto the gateway he drew near,
And underneath its ruined archway passed
Into the court, a strange noise did he hear,
And through his heart there shot a pang of fear;
Trembling, he gat his sword into his hand,
And midmost of the cloisters took his stand.

But for a while that unknown noise increased,
A rattling, that with strident roars did blend,
And whining moans; but suddenly it ceased—
A fearful thing stood at the cloister's end,
And eyed him for a while, then 'gan to wend
Adown the cloisters, and began again
That rattling, and the moan like fiends in pain.

And as it came on toward him, with its teeth
The body of a slain goat did it tear,
The blood whereof in its hot jaws did seethe,
And on its tongue he saw the smoking hair;
Then his heart sank, and standing trembling there,

Throughout his mind wild thoughts and fearful ran,
"Some fiend she was," he said, "the bane of man."

Yet he abode her still, although his blood
Curdled within him. The thing dropped the goat,
And creeping on, came close to where he stood,
And raised its head to him, and wrinkled throat;
Then he cried out and wildly at her smote,
Shutting his eyes, and turned and from the place
Ran swiftly, with a white and ghastly face.

But little things rough stones and tree-trunks seemed,
And if he fell, he rose and ran on still.
No more he felt his hurts than if he dreamed;
He made no stay for valley or steep hill;
Heedless, he dashed through many a foaming rill,
Until he came unto the ship at last,
And with no word into the deep hold passed.

Meanwhile the dragon, seeing him clean gone,
Followed him not, but crying horribly,
Caught up within her jaws a block of stone
And ground it into powder, then turned she,
With cries that folk could hear far out at sea,
And reached the treasure set apart of old,
To brood above the hidden heaps of gold.

Yet was she seen again on many a day
By some half-waking mariner, or heard,
Playing amid the ripples of the bay,
Or on the hills making all things afeard,
Or in the wood, that did that castle gird,
But never any man again durst go
To seek her woman's form, and end her woe.

As for the man, who knows what things he bore?
What mournful faces peopled the sad night,
What wailings vexed him with reproaches sore,
What images of that nigh-gained delight!
What dreamed caresses from soft hands and white,
Turning to horrors ere they reached the best!
What struggles vain, what shame, what huge unrest!

No man he knew; three days he lay and raved,
And cried for death, until a lethargy
Fell on him, and his fellows thought him saved;
But on the third night he awoke to die;
And at Byzantium doth his body lie
Between two blossoming pomegranate trees,
Within the churchyard of the Genoese. (1868)

## Song from OGIER THE DANE

*Hæc*

In the white-flowered hawthorn brake,
Love, be merry for my sake;
Twine the blossoms in my hair,
Kiss me where I am most fair —
Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

*Ille*

Nay, the garlanded gold hair
Hides thee where thou art most fair;
Hides the rose-tinged hills of snow —
Ah, sweet love, I have thee now!
Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

*Hæc*

Shall we weep for a dead day,
Or set Sorrow in our way?
Hidden by my golden hair,
Wilt thou weep that sweet days wear?
Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death?

*Ille*

Weep, O love, the days that flit,
  Now, while I can feel thy breath;
Then may I remember it
  Sad and old, and near my death.
Kiss me, love! for who knoweth
What thing cometh after death? (1868)

## Song from THE HILL OF VENUS

Before our lady came on earth
Little there was of joy or mirth;
About the borders of the sea
The sea-folk wandered heavily;
About the wintry river side
The weary fishers would abide.

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516. **Byzantium**, an ancient Greek city on the site of Constantinople. It contained a cemetery for natives of Genoa who had moved there.

*Song from Ogier the Dane.* Ogier was a Danish prince, a hero of medieval French romances. The song given here was heard by Ogier as it was sung by two young voices early in the morning; it seemed to him to be the farewell of the Queen of France, whom he loved. *Haec* and *Ille* are *She* and *He*.

*Song from The Hill of Venus.* See note on *Laus Veneris*, line 25, page 665. The song given here was heard by a knight as he awoke from a swoon. It was sung by a group of young men and maidens deeply in love.

Alone within the weaving-room
The girls would sit before the loom,
And sing no song, and play no play;
Alone from dawn to hot mid-day,
From mid-day unto evening,
The men afield would work, nor sing,
'Mid weary thoughts of man and God,
Before thy feet the wet ways trod.

Unkissed, the merchant bore his care;
Unkissed, the knights went out to war;
Unkissed, the mariner came home;
Unkissed, the minstrel men did roam.

Or in the stream the maids would stare,
Nor know why they were made so fair;
Their yellow locks, their bosoms white,
Their limbs well wrought for all delight,
Seemed foolish things that waited death,
As hopeless as the flowers beneath
The weariness of unkissed feet.
No life was bitter then, or sweet.

Therefore, O Venus, well may we
Praise the green ridges of the sea
O'er which, upon a happy day,
Thou cam'st to take our shame away.
Well may we praise the curdling foam
Amidst the which thy feet did bloom,
Flowers of the gods; the yellow sand
They kissed atwixt the sea and land;
The bee-beset, ripe-seeded grass,
Through which thy fine limbs first did pass;
The purple-dusted butterfly,
First blown against thy quivering thigh;
The first red rose that touched thy side,
And over-blown and fainting died;
The flickering of the orange shade,
Where first in sleep thy limbs were laid;
The happy day's sweet life and death,
Whose air first caught thy balmy breath —
Yea, all these things well praised may be,
But with what words shall we praise thee —
O Venus, O thou love alive,
Born to give peace to souls that strive?

(1870)

## L'ENVOI

Here are we for the last time face to face,
Thou and I, Book, before I bid thee speed
Upon thy perilous journey to that place
For which I have done on thee pilgrim's weed,
Striving to get thee all things for thy need —
I love thee, whatso time or men may say
Of the poor singer of an empty day.

Good reason why I love thee, e'en if thou
Be mocked or clean forgot as time wears on;
For ever as thy fashioning did grow,
Kind word and praise because of thee I won
From those without whom were my world all gone,
My hope fallen dead, my singing cast away,
And I set soothly in an empty day.

I love thee; yet this last time must it be
That thou must hold thy peace and I must speak,
Lest if thou babble I begin to see
Thy gear too thin, thy limbs and heart too weak,
To find the land thou goest forth to seek —
Though what harm if thou die upon the way,
Thou idle singer of an empty day?

But though this land desired thou never reach,
Yet folk who know it mayst thou meet, or death;
Therefore a word unto thee would I teach
To answer these, who, noting thy weak breath,
Thy wandering eyes, thy heart of little faith,
May make thy fond desire a sport and play
Mocking the singer of an empty day.

That land's name, say'st thou? and the road thereto?
Nay, Book, thou mockest, saying thou know'st it not;
Surely no book of verse I ever knew
But ever was the heart within him hot
To gain the Land of Matters Unforgot —
There, now we both laugh — as the whole world may,
At us poor singers of an empty day.

Nay, let it pass, and harken! Hast thou heard
That therein I believe I have a friend,
Of whom for love I may not be afeared?
It is to him indeed I bid thee wend;
Yea, he perchance may meet thee ere thou end,
Dying so far off from the hedge of bay,
Thou idle singer of an empty day!

Well, think of him, I bid thee, on the road,
And if it hap that midst of thy defeat,
Fainting beneath thy follies' heavy load,
My Master, Geoffrey Chaucer, thou do meet,
Then shalt thou win a space of rest full sweet;
Then be thou bold, and speak the words I say,
The idle singer of an empty day!

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*L'Envoi.* **4. done . . . weed,** put on thee the garments of a pilgrim preparatory to a journey—i.e., got you printed.

**41. bay,** laurel. In ancient times poets were crowned with wreaths of laurel or myrtle. **46. Geoffrey Chaucer.** The framework of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is similar to that of *The Earthly Paradise.*

"O Master, O thou great of heart and tongue,
Thou well mayst ask me why I wander here,
In raiment rent of stories oft besung!
But of thy gentleness draw thou anear,
And then the heart of one who held thee dear
Mayst thou behold! So near as that I lay
Unto the singer of an empty day.

"For this he ever said, who sent me forth
To seek a place amid thy company:
That howsoever little was my worth,
Yet was he worth e'en just so much as I;
He said that rime hath little skill to lie;
Nor feigned to cast his worser part away:
In idle singing for an empty day.

"I have beheld him tremble oft enough
At things he could not choose but trust to me,
Although he knew the world was wise and rough;
And never did he fail to let me see
His love — his folly and faithlessness, maybe;
And still in turn I gave him voice to pray
Such prayers as cling about an empty day.

"Thou, keen-eyed, reading me, mayst read him through,
For surely little is there left behind;
No power great deeds unnameable to do;
No knowledge for which words he may not find,
No love of things as vague as autumn wind —
Earth of the earth lies hidden by my clay,
The idle singer of an empty day!

"Children we twain are, saith he, late made wise
In love, but in all else most childish still,
And seeking still the pleasure of our eyes,
And what our ears with sweetest sounds may fill;
Not fearing Love, lest these things he should kill;
Howe'er his pain by pleasure doth he lay,
Making a strange tale of an empty day.

"Death have we hated, knowing not what it meant;
Life had we loved, through green leaf and through sere,
Though still the less we knew of its intent;
The Earth and Heaven through countless year on year,
Slow changing, were to us but curtains fair,
Hung round about a little room, where play
Weeping and laughter of man's empty day.

"O Master, if thine heart could love us yet,
Spite of things left undone, and wrongly done,
Some place in loving hearts then should we get,
For thou, sweet-souled, didst never stand alone,
But knew'st the joy and woe of many an one —
By lovers dead, who live through thee, we pray,
Help thou us singers of an empty day!"

Fearest thou, Book, what answer thou mayst gain
Lest he should scorn thee, and thereof thou die?
Nay, it shall not be. — Thou mayst toil in vain,
And never draw the House of Fame anigh;
Yet he and his shall know whereof we cry,
Shall call it not ill done to strive to lay
The ghosts that crowd about life's empty day.

Then let the others go! and if indeed
In some old garden thou and I have wrought,
And made fresh flowers spring up from hoarded seed,
And fragrance of old days and deeds have brought
Back to folk weary, all was not for naught.
— No little part it was for me to play —
The idle singer of an empty day. (1870)

## From *THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG*

### OF THE PASSING AWAY OF BRYNHILD

Once more on the morrow-morning fair shineth the glorious sun,
And the Niblung children labor on a deed that shall be done.
For out in the people's meadows they raise a bale on high,
The oak and the ash together, and thereon shall the Mighty lie;
Nor gold nor steel shall be lacking, nor savor of sweet spice,
Nor cloths in the Southlands woven, nor webs of untold price.
The work grows, toil is as nothing; long blasts of the mighty horn
From the topmost tower out-wailing o'er the woeful world are borne.

But Brynhild lay in her chamber, and her women went and came,
And they feared and trembled before her, and none spake Sigurd's name;

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102. **House of Fame**, a punning reference to Chaucer's *Hous of Fame*.

*The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*. See Critical Notes.

*Of the Passing Away of Brynhild*. 3. **bale**, funeral pyre for Sigurd, the Mighty.

But whiles they deemed her weeping, and whiles they deemed indeed
That she spake, if they might but hearken, but no words their ears might heed;
Till at last she spake out clearly:
"I know not what ye would;
For ye come and go in my chamber, and ye seem of wavering mood
To thrust me on, or to stay me; to help my heart in woe,
Or to bid my days of sorrow midst nameless folly go."

None answered the word of Brynhild, none knew of her intent;
But she spake: "Bid hither Gunnar, lest the sun sink o'er the bent,
And leave the words unspoken I yet have will to speak."

Then her maidens go from before her, and that lord of war they seek,
And he stands by the bed of Brynhild and strives to entreat and beseech,
But her eyes gaze awfully on him, and his lips may learn no speech.
And she saith:
"I slept in the morning, or I dreamed in the waking-hour,
And my dream was of thee, O Gunnar, and the bed in thy kingly bower,
And the house that I blessed in my sorrow, and cursed in my sorrow and shame,
The gates of an ancient people, the towers of a mighty name.
King, cold was the hall I have dwelt in, and no brand burned on the hearth;
Dead-cold was thy bed, O Gunnar, and thy land was parched with dearth;

"But I saw a great king riding, and a master of the harp,
And he rode amidst of the foemen, and the swords were bitter-sharp,
But his hand in the hand-gyves smote not, and his feet in the fetters were fast,
While many a word of mocking at his speechless face was cast.
Then I heard a voice in the world: 'O woe for the broken troth,
And the heavy Need of the Niblungs, and the Sorrow of Odin the Goth!
Then I saw the halls of the strangers, and the hills, and the dark-blue sea,
Nor knew of their names and their nations, for earth was afar from me,
But brother rose up against brother, and blood swam over the board,
And women smote and spared not, and the fire was master and lord.
Then, then was the moonless mid-mirk, and I woke to the day and the deed,
The deed that earth shall name not, the day of its bitterest need.
Many words have I said in my life-days, and little more shall I say.
Ye have heard the dream of a woman — deal with it as ye may;
For meseems the world-ways sunder, and the dusk and the dark is mine,
Till I come to the hall of Freyia, where the deeds of the mighty shall shine.'"

So hearkened Gunnar the Niblung, that her words he understood,
And he knew she was set on the death-stroke, and he deemed it nothing good.
But he said: "I have hearkened, and heeded thy death and mine in thy words;
I have done the deed and abide it, and my face shall laugh on the swords.
But thee, woman, I bid thee abide here till thy grief of soul abate;
Meseems naught lowly nor shameful shall be the Niblung fate;
And here shalt thou rule and be mighty, and be queen of the measureless Gold,
And abase the kings and upraise them; and anew shall thy fame be told,
And as fair shall thy glory blossom as the fresh fields under the spring."

Then he casteth his arms about her, and hot is the heart of the King
For the glory of Queen Brynhild and the hope of her days of gain,
And he clean forgetteth Sigurd and the foster-brother slain;
But she shrank aback from before him, and cried: "Woe worth the while
For the thoughts ye drive back on me, and the memory of your guile!
The Kings of Earth were gathered, the wise of men were met;
On the death of a woman's pleasure their glorious hearts were set,
And I was alone amidst them — ah, hold thy peace hereof!
Lest the thought of the bitterest hours this little hour should move."

He rose abashed from before her, and yet he lingered there;

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18. **bent**, heath, moor.

39. **mid-mirk**, mid-gloom, deepest gloom. **the deed**, her suicide. 44. **Freyia**, the goddess who presides over the regions of the dead. 48. **the deed**, his part in deceiving Brynhild. (See Critical Note on title.) 56. **foster-brother slain**, Guttorm.

Then she said: "O King of the Niblungs, what noise do I hearken and hear?
Why ring the axes and hammers, while feet of men go past,
And shields from the wall are shaken, and swords on the pavement cast,
And the door of the treasure is open, and the horn cries loud and long,
And the feet of the Niblung children to the people's meadows throng?"

His face was troubled before her, and again she spake and said:
"Meseemeth this is the hour when men array the dead;
Wilt thou tell me tidings, Gunnar, that the children of thy folk
Pile up the bale for Guttorm, and the hand that smote the stroke?"

He said: "It is not so, Brynhild; for that Giuki's son was burned
When the moon of the middle heaven last night toward dawning turned."

They looked on each other and spake not; but Gunnar gat him gone,
And came to his brother Hogni, the wise-heart Giuki's son,
And spake: "Thou art wise, O Hogni; go in to Brynhild the queen,
And stay her swift departing; or the last of her days hath she seen."

"It is naught, thy word," said Hogni, "wilt thou bring dead men aback,
Or the souls of kings departed midst the battle and the wrack?
Yet this shall be easier to thee than the turning Brynhild's heart;
She came to dwell among us, but in us she had no part;
Let her go her ways from the Niblungs with her hand in Sigurd's hand.
Will the grass grow up henceforward where her feet have trodden the land?"

"O evil day," said Gunnar, "when my queen must perish and die!"

"Such oft betide," saith Hogni, "as the lives of men flit by;
But the evil day is a day, and on each day groweth a deed,
And a thing that never dieth; and the fateful tale shall speed.
Lo now, let us harden our hearts and set our brows as the brass,
Lest men say it, 'They loathed the evil, and they brought the evil to pass.'"

So they spake, and their hearts were heavy, and they longed for the morrow morn,
And the morrow of tomorrow, and the new day yet to be born.

But Brynhild cried to her maidens: "Now open ark and chest,
And draw forth queenly raiment of the loveliest and the best,
Red rings that the Dwarf-lords fashioned, fair cloths that queens have sewed
To array the bride for the mighty, and the traveler for the road."

They wept as they wrought her bidding and did on her goodliest gear,
But she laughed mid the dainty linen, and the gold-rings fashioned fair;
She arose from the bed of the Niblungs, and her face no more was wan;
As a star in the dawn-tide heavens, mid the dusky house she shone.
And they that stood about her, their hearts were raised aloft
Amid their fear and wonder; then she spake them kind and soft:

"Now give me my sword, O maidens, wherewith I sheared the wind
When the Kings of Earth were gathered to know the Chooser's mind."

All sheathed the maidens brought it, and feared the hidden blade,
But the naked blue-white edges across her knees she laid,
And spake: "The heaped-up riches, the gear my fathers left,
All dear-bought woven wonders, all rings from battle reft,
All goods of men desired, now strew them on the floor,
And so share among you, maidens, the gifts of Brynhild's store."

They brought them mid their weeping, but none put forth a hand
To take that wealth desired, the spoils of many a land.
There they stand and weep before her, and some are moved to speech,
And they cast their arms about her and strive with her, and beseech
That she look on her loved-ones' sorrow and the glory of the day.

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97. **did on . . . gear,** put on her best raiment. 103-104. **sword . . . mind.** Brynhild was one of the Old Norse Valkyries (the Choosers of the Slain), twelve nymphs who, mounted on swift horses and holding drawn swords, rushed into the thick of the battle and chose those destined to death. 107. **gear,** property.

It was naught; she scarce might see them, and she put their hands away,
And she said: "Peace, ye that love me! and take the gifts and the gold
In remembrance of my fathers and the faithful deeds of old."

Then she spake: "Where now is Gunnar, that I may speak with him?
For new things are mine eyes beholding and the Niblung house grows dim,
And new sounds gather about me, that may hinder me to speak
When the breath is near to flitting, and the voice is waxen weak."

Then upright by the bed of the Niblungs for a moment doth she stand,
And the blade flasheth bright in the chamber, but no more they hinder her hand
Than if a god were smiting to rend the world in two;
Then dulled are the glittering edges, and the bitter point cleaves through
The breast of the all-wise Brynhild, and her feet from the pavement fail,
And the sigh of her heart is hearkened mid the hush of the maidens' wail.
Chill, deep is the fear upon them, but they bring her aback to the bed,
And her hand is yet on the hilts, and sidelong droopeth her head.

Then there cometh a cry from withoutward, and Gunnar's hurrying feet
Are swift on the kingly threshold, and Brynhild's blood they meet.
Low down o'er the bed he hangeth and hearkeneth for her word,
And her heavy lids are opened to look on the Niblung lord,
And she saith:
"I pray thee a prayer, the last word in the world I speak,
That ye bear me forth to Sigurd, and the hand my hand would seek;
The bale for the dead is builded, it is wrought full wide on the plain,
It is raised for Earth's best Helper, and thereon is room for twain.
Ye have hung the shields about it, and the Southland hangings spread;
There lay me adown by Sigurd and my head beside his head;
But ere ye leave us sleeping, draw his Wrath from out the sheath,
And lay that Light of the Branstock, and the blade that frighted death
Betwixt my side and Sigurd's, as it lay that while agone,
When once in one bed together we twain were laid alone.
How then when the flames flare upward may I be left behind?
How then may the road he wendeth be hard for my feet to find?
How then in the gates of Valhall may the door of the gleaming ring
Clash to on the heel of Sigurd, as I follow on my king?"

Then she raised herself on her elbow, but again her eyelids sank,
And the wound by the sword-edge whispered, as her heart from the iron shrank,
And she moaned: "O lives of man-folk, for unrest all overlong
By the Father were ye fashioned; and what hope amendeth wrong?
Now at last, O my belovéd, all is gone; none else is near.
Through the ages of all ages, never sundered, shall we wear."

Scarce more than a sigh was the word, as back on the bed she fell,
Nor was there need in the chamber of the passing of Brynhild to tell;
And no more their lamentation might the maidens hold aback,
But the sound of their bitter mourning was as if red-handed wrack
Ran wild in the Burg of the Niblungs, and the fire were master of all.

Then the voice of Gunnar the war-king cried out o'er the weeping hall:
"Wail on, O women forsaken, for the mightiest woman born!
Now the hearth is cold and joyless, and the waste bed lieth forlorn.
Wail on, but amid your weeping lay hand to the glorious dead,
That not alone for an hour may lie Queen Brynhild's head;
For here have been heavy tidings, and the Mightiest under shield
Is laid on the bale high-builded in the Niblungs' hallowed field.
Fare forth! for he abideth, and we do All-father wrong,
If the shining Valhall's pavement await their feet o'erlong."

Then they took the body of Brynhild in the raiment that she wore,

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141. **Wrath**, the name of Sigurd's sword. 142. **Light of the Branstock**, the bright sword that Sigmund, son of Volsung, drew from Branstock, the great oak tree about which the Hall of the Volsungs had been built.

143. **lay . . . agone.** See Critical Note on title. 147. **Valhall**, Valhalla—in Norse mythology the hall of Odin, father of the gods. With him dwelt all warriors slain in battle. 165. **under shield**, that ever bore shield. 167. **All-father**, Odin, the Father of All.

And out through the gate of the Niblungs the holy corpse they bore,
And thence forth to the mead of the people and the high-built shielded bale;
Then afresh in the open meadows breaks forth the women's wail
When they see the bed of Sigurd and the glittering of his gear;
And fresh is the wail of the people as Brynhild draweth anear,
And the tidings go before her that for twain the bale is built,
That for twain is the oak-wood shielded and the pleasant odors spilt.

There is peace on the bale of Sigurd, and the gods look down from on high,
And they see the lids of the Volsung close shut against the sky,
As he lies with his shield beside him in the Hauberk all of gold,
That has not its like in the heavens, nor has earth of its fellow told;
And forth from the Helm of Aweing are the sunbeams flashing wide,
And the sheathéd Wrath of Sigurd lies still by his mighty side.
Then cometh an elder of days, a man of the ancient times,
Who is long past sorrow and joy, and the steep of the bale he climbs;
And he kneeleth down by Sigurd, and bareth the Wrath to the sun
That the beams are gathered about it, and from hilt to blood-point run,
And wide o'er the plain of the Niblungs doth the Light of the Branstock glare,
Till the wondering mountain-shepherds on that star of noontide stare,
And fear for many an evil; but the ancient man stands still
With the war-flame on his shoulder, nor thinks of good or of ill,
Till the feet of Brynhild's bearers on the topmost bale are laid,
And her bed is dight by Sigurd's; then he sinks the pale white blade
And lays it 'twixt the sleepers, and leaves them there alone —
He, the last that shall ever behold them — and his days are wellnigh done.

There is silence over the plain; in the noon shine the torches pale,
As the best of the Niblung Earl-folk bear fire to the builded bale;
Then a wind in the west ariseth, and the white flames leap on high,
And with one voice crieth the people a great and mighty cry,
And men cast up hands to the Heavens, and pray without a word,
As they that have seen God's visage, and the face of the Father have heard.

They are gone — the lovely, the mighty, the hope of the ancient Earth;
It shall labor and bear the burden as before that day of their birth;
It shall groan in its blind abiding for the day that Sigurd hath sped,
And the hour that Brynhild hath hastened, and the dawn that waketh the dead.
It shall yearn, and be ofttimes holpen, and forget their deeds no more,
Till the new sun beams on Baldur, and the happy sealess shore.

(1876)

### Gunnar in the Pit of Adders

Then was Gunnar silent a little, and the shout in the hall had died,
And he spoke as a man awakening, and turned on Atli's pride.
"Thou all-rich King of the Eastlands, e'en such a man might I be
That I might utter a word, and the heart should be glad in thee,
And I should live and be sorry; for I, I only am left
To tell of the ransom of Odin, and the wealth from the toiler reft.
Lo, once it lay in the water, hid, deep adown it lay,
Till the gods were grieved and lacking, and men saw it and the day;
Let it lie in the water once more, let the gods be rich and in peace!
But I at least in the world from the words and the babble shall cease."

So he spake and Atli beheld him, and before his eyes he shrank;
Still deep of the cup of desire the mighty Atli drank,
And to overcome seemed little if the Gold he might not have,
And his hard heart craved for a while to hold the King for a slave,
A bondman blind and guarded in his glorious house and great.
But he thought of the overbold, and of kings who have dallied with fate,

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176. **oak-wood shielded**, the funeral pyre, built of oak (and ash, line 4), covered with shields. 181. **Helm of Aweing**, helmet of Sigurd, that frightened foes. 192. **dight**, prepared. 196. **Earl-folk**, Norse chieftains, ranking just below the king. Lower-ranking people were known as carles.

206. **Baldur**, son of Odin, and the Norse god of light and peace.
*Gunnar in the Pit of Adders.* See Critical Note on title.

And died bemocked and smitten; and he deemed it worser than well
While the last of the sons of Giuki hangeth back from his journey to Hell;
So he turneth away from the stranger, and beholdeth Gudrun his wife,
Not glad nor sorry by seeming, no stirrer nor stayer of strife.
Then he looked at his living earl-folk, and thought of his groves of war,
And his realm and the kindred nations, and his measureless guarded store.
And he thought: Shall Atli perish, shall his name be cast to the dead,
Though the feeble folk go wailing? Then he cried aloud and said:

"Why tarry ye, Sons of the Morning? The wain for the bondman is dight;
And the folk that are waiting his body have need of no sunshine to smite.
Go forth 'neath the stars and night-wind; go forth by the cloud and the moon,
And come back with the word in the dawning, that my house may be merry at noon!"

Then the sword-folk rise round Gunnar, round the fettered and bound they throng,
As men in the bitter battle round the God-kin over-strong;
They bore him away to the doorway, and the winds were awake in the night,
And the wood of the thorns of battle in the moon shone sharp and bright;
But Gunnar looked to the heavens, and blessed the promise of rain,
And the windy drift of the clouds, and the dew on the builded wain;
And the sword-folk tarried a little, and the sons of the wise were there,
And beheld his face o'er the war-helms, and the wavy night of his hair.
Then they feared for the weal of Atli, and the Niblung's harp they brought,
And they dealt with the thralls of the sword, and commanded and besought,
Till men loosened the gyves of Gunnar, and laid the harp by his side.
Then the yoke-beasts lowed in the forecourt, and the wheels of the wagon cried,
And the war-thorns clashed in the night, and the men went dark on their way,
And the city was silent before them; on the roofs the white moon lay.
Now they left the gate and the highway, and came to a lonely place,
Where the sun all day had been shining on the desert's empty face;
Then the moon ran forth from a cloud, the gray light shone and showed
The pit of King Atli's adders in the land without a road,
Digged deep adown in the desert with shining walls and smooth
For the Serpent's habitation, and folk that know not ruth.
Therein they thrust King Gunnar, and he bare of his kingly weed,
But they gave his harp to the Niblung, and his hands of the gyves they freed;
They stood around in their war-gear to note what next should befall
For the comfort of King Atli, and the glee of the Eastland hall.

Still hot was that close with the sun, and thronged with the coiling folk,
And about the feet of Gunnar their hissing mouths awoke;
But he heeded them not nor beheld them, and his hands in the harp-strings ran,
As he sat him down in the midmost on a sun-scorched rock and wan;
And he sighed as one who resteth on a flowery bank by the way
When the wind is in the blossoms at the eventide of day.
But his harp was murmuring low, and he mused: Am I come to the death,
And I, who was Gunnar the Niblung? Nay, nay, how I draw my breath,
And love my life as the living! and so I ever shall do,
Though wrack be loosed in the heavens and the world be fashioned anew.

But the worms were beholding their prey, and they drew around and nigher,
Smooth coil, and flickering tongue, and eyes as the gold in the fire;
And he looked and beheld them and spake, nor stilled his harp meanwhile:
"What will ye, O thralls of Atli, O images of guile?"

Then he rose at once to his feet, and smote the harp with his hand,
And it rang as if with a cry in the dream of a lonely land;
Then he fondled its wail as it faded, and orderly over the strings

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20. **by seeming**, in appearance. 21. **groves of war**, warriors. 25. **wain . . . dight**, wagon for Gunnar is ready. 28. **the word**, that Gunnar is dead. 32. **thorns of battle**, spears. Such a metaphor is known as a kenning. It is a convention of poetic diction in Norse and early Teutonic literature. 38. **dealt . . . sword.** The "sons of the wise," the chieftains, gave orders to the "sword-folk," who held back from the task. 41. **war-thorns**, spears.

53. **close**, enclosure.

Went the marvelous sound of its sweetness, like the march of Odin's kings
New-risen for play in the morning when o'er meadows of God-home they wend,
And hero playeth with hero, that their hands may be deft in the end.
But the crests of the worms were uplifted, though coil on coil was stayed,
And they moved but as dark-green rushes by the summer river swayed.
Then uprose the Song of Gunnar, and sang o'er his crafty hands,
And told of the World of Aforetime, unshapen, void of lands;
Yet it wrought, for its memory bideth, and it died and abode its doom;
It shaped, and the Upper-Heavens, and the hope came forth from its womb.

Great then grew the voice of Gunnar, and his speech was sweet on the wild,
And the moon on his harp was shining, and the hands of the Niblung child:

"So perished the Gap of the Gaping, and the cold sea swayed and sang.
And the wind came down on the waters, and the beaten rock-walls rang;
Then the Sun from the south came shining, and the Starry Host stood round,
And the wandering Moon of the heavens his habitation found;
And they knew not why they were gathered, nor the deeds of their shaping they knew.
But lo, Mid-Earth the Noble 'neath their might and their glory grew,
And the grass spread over its face, and the Night and the Day were born,
And it cried on the Death in the even, and it cried on the Life in the morn;
Yet it waxed and waxed, and knew not, and it lived and had not learned;
And where were the Framers that framed, and the Soul and the Might that had yearned?

"On the Thrones are the Powers that fashioned, and they name the Night and the Day,
And the tide of the Moon's increasing, and the tide of his waning away;
And they name the years for the story; and the Lands they change and change,
The great and the mean and the little, that this unto that may be strange.
They met, and they fashioned dwellings, and the House of Glory they built;
They met, and they fashioned the Dwarf-kind, and the Gold and the Gifts and the Guilt.

"There were twain, and they went upon earth, and were speechless unmighty and wan;
They were hopeless, deathless, lifeless, and the Mighty named them Man.
Then they gave them speech and power, and they gave them color and breath;
And deeds and the hope they gave them, and they gave them Life and Death —
Yea, hope, as the hope of the Framers; yea, might, as the Fashioners had,
Till they wrought, and rejoiced in their bodies, and saw their sons and were glad;
And they changed their lives and departed, and came back as the leaves of the trees
Come back and increase in the summer — and I, I, I am of these;
And I know of Them that have fashioned, and the deeds that have blossomed and grow;
But naught of the gods' repentance, or the gods' undoing I know."

Then falleth the speech of Gunnar, and his lips the word forget,
But his crafty hands are busy, and the harp is murmuring yet.

And the crests of the worms have fallen, and their flickering tongues are still,
The Roller and the Coiler, and Grayback, lord of ill,
Grave-groper and Death-swaddler, the Slumberer of the Heath,
Gold-wallower, Venom-smiter, lie still, forgetting death,
And loose are coils of Long-back; yea, all as soft are laid
As the kine in midmost summer about the elmy glade —
All save the Gray and Ancient, that holds his crest aloft,
Light-wavering as the flame-tongue when the evening wind is soft;
For he comes of the kin of the Serpent once wrought all wrong to nurse,
The bond of earthly evil, and Midworld's ancient curse.

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70. **march of Odin's kings.** Odin was the father of the gods of Norse mythology. When he and his heroes in Valhalla were not feasting, they amused themselves with fighting. Every day they rode out into the field and fought until they cut each other to pieces; but they soon recovered from their wounds and returned to feast in Valhalla. 81. **Gap of the Gaping,** Ginungagap, the bottomless deep of the Norse story of creation, which is the theme of Gunnar's song, lines 81-106, 123-144. The abode of man was Midgard, or Mid-Earth (line 86).

106. **gods' undoing,** the period of Ragnarok, the Twilight of the Gods, when the world was destroyed. 118. **Midworld's . . . curse,** the Midgard Serpent, the child of Loki, who is described in Norse mythology as the calumniator of the gods and the contriver of all evil.

But Gunnar looked and considered, and wise and wary he grew,
And the dark of night was waning and chill in the dawning it grew;
But his hands were strong and mighty and the fainting harp he woke,
And cried in the deadly desert, and the song from his soul out-broke:

"O Hearken, Kindreds and Nations, and all Kings of the plenteous earth,
Heed, ye that shall come hereafter, and are far and far from the birth!
I have dwelt in the world aforetime, and I called it the garden of God;
I have stayed my heart with its sweetness, and fair on its freshness I trod;
I have seen its tempest and wondered, I have cowered adown from its rain,
And desired the brightening sunshine, and seen it and been fain;
I have waked, time was, in its dawning; its noon and its even I wore;
I have slept unafraid of its darkness, and the days have been many and more.
I have dwelt with the deeds of the mighty; I have woven the web of the sword;
I have borne up the guilt nor repented; I have sorrowed nor spoken the word;
And I fought and was glad in the morning, and I sing in the night and the end;
So let him stand forth, the Accuser, and do on the death-shoon to wend;
For not here on the earth shall I hearken, nor on earth for the dooming shall stay,
Nor stretch out mine hand for the pleading; for I see the spring of the day
Round the doors of the golden Valhall, and I see the mighty arise,
And I hearken the voice of Odin, and his mouth on Gunnar cries,
And he nameth the Son of Giuki, and cries on deeds long done,
And the fathers of my fathers, and the sons of yore agone.

"O Odin, I see, and I hearken; but, lo thou, the bonds on my feet,
And the walls of the wilderness round me, ere the light of thy land I meet!
I crave and I weary, Allfather, and long and dark is the road;
And the feet of the mighty are weakened, and the back is bent with the load."

Then fainted the song of Gunnar, and the harp from his hand fell down,
And he cried: "Ah, what hath betided? for cold the world hath grown,
And cold is the heart within me, and my hand is heavy and strange;
What voice is the voice I hearken in the chill and the dusk and the change?
Where art thou, God of the war-fain? for this is the death indeed;
And I unsworded, unshielded, in the Day of the Niblungs' Need!"

He fell to the earth as he spake, and life left Gunnar the King,
For his heart was chilled forever by the sleepless serpent's sting,
The gray Worm, Great and Ancient — and day in the East began,
And the moon was low in the heavens, and the light clouds over him ran.

(1876)

## THE DAY IS COMING

Come hither, lads, and harken, for a tale there is to tell,
Of the wonderful days a-coming, when all shall be better than well.

And the tale shall be told of a country, a land in the midst of the sea,
And folk shall call it England in the days that are going to be.

There more than one in a thousand in the days that are yet to come,
Shall have some hope of the morrow, some joy of the ancient home.

For then — laugh not, but listen to this strange tale of mine —
All folk that are in England shall be better lodged than swine.

Then a man shall work and bethink him, and rejoice in the deeds of his hand,
Nor yet come home in the even too faint and weary to stand.

Men in that time a-coming shall work and have no fear
For tomorrow's lack of earning and the hunger-wolf anear.

I tell you this for a wonder, that no man then shall be glad
Of his fellow's fall and mishap to snatch at the work he had,

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134. **do . . . wend**, put on the death shoes that I may go.
135. **dooming**, judging.

*The Day Is Coming.* Late in the seventies Morris became interested in politics and joined the Socialist Party. Virtually all his time in 1883-85 was given to the cause. This poem, together with others that follow, expresses his interest in the welfare of the lower classes. It was published with *The Voice of Toil*, *No Master*, *Down among the Dead Men*, and other poems in a pamphlet entitled *Chants for Socialists*.

For that which the worker winneth shall then be his indeed,
Nor shall half be reaped for nothing by him that sowed no seed.

O strange new wonderful justice! But for whom shall we gather the gain?
For ourselves and for each of our fellows, and no hand shall labor in vain.

Then all Mine and all Thine shall be Ours, and no more shall any man crave
For riches that serve for nothing but to fetter a friend for a slave.

And what wealth then shall be left us when none shall gather gold
To buy his friend in the market, and pinch and pine the sold?

Nay, what save the lovely city, and the little house on the hill,
And the wastes and the woodland beauty, and the happy fields we till;

And the homes of ancient stories, the tombs of the mighty dead;
And the wise men seeking out marvels, and the poet's teeming head;

And the painter's hand of wonder; and the marvelous fiddle-bow,
And the banded choirs of music — all those that do and know.

For all these shall be ours and all men's; nor shall any lack a share
Of the toil and the gain of living in the days when the world grows fair.

Ah! such are the days that shall be! But what are the deeds of today,
In the days of the years we dwell in, that wear our lives away?

Why, then, and for what are we waiting? There are three words to speak —
We will it — and what is the foeman but the dream-strong wakened and weak?

O why and for what are we waiting? while our brothers droop and die,
And on every wind of the heavens a wasted life goes by.

How long shall they reproach us where crowd on crowd they dwell,
Poor ghosts of the wicked city, the gold-crushed, hungry hell?

Through squalid life they labored, in sordid grief they died,
Those sons of a mighty mother, those props of England's pride.

They are gone; there is none can undo it, nor save our souls from the curse;
But many a million cometh, and shall they be better or worse?

It is we must answer and hasten, and open wide the door
For the rich man's hurrying terror, and the slow-foot hope of the poor.

Yea, the voiceless wrath of the wretched, and their unlearned discontent,
We must give it voice and wisdom till the waiting-tide be spent.

Come, then, since all things call us, the living and the dead,
And o'er the weltering tangle a glimmering light is shed.

Come, then, let us cast off fooling, and put by ease and rest,
For the Cause alone is worthy till the good days bring the best.

Come, join in the only battle wherein no man can fail,
Where whoso fadeth and dieth, yet his deed shall still prevail.

Ah! come, cast off all fooling, for this, at least, we know:
That the Dawn and the Day is coming, and forth the Banners go.

(1884)

## THE VOICE OF TOIL

I heard men saying, Leave hope and praying,
All days shall be as all have been;
Today and tomorrow bring fear and sorrow,
The never ending toil between.

When Earth was younger mid toil and hunger,
In hope we strove, and our hands were strong;
Then great men led us, with words they fed us,
And bade us right the earthly wrong.

Go read in story their deeds and glory,
Their names amidst the nameless dead;
Turn then from lying to us slow-dying
In that good world to which they led;

Where fast and faster our iron master,
The thing we made, forever drives,
Bids us grind treasure and fashion pleasure
For other hopes and other lives.

Where home is a hovel and dull we grovel,
Forgetting that the world is fair;
Where no babe we cherish, lest its very soul perish;
Where mirth is crime, and love a snare.

Who now shall lead us, what god shall heed us
As we lie in the hell our hands have won?
For us are no rulers but fools and befoolers;
The great are fallen, the wise men gone.

I heard men saying, Leave tears and praying,
The sharp knife heedeth not the sheep;
Are we not stronger than the rich and the wronger,
When day breaks over dreams and sleep?

Come, shoulder to shoulder, ere the world grows older!
Help lies in naught but thee and me;
Hope is before us, the long years that bore us
Bore leaders more than men may be.

Let dead hearts tarry and trade and marry,
And trembling nurse their dreams of mirth,
While we the living our lives are giving
To bring the bright new world to birth.

Come, shoulder to shoulder, ere earth grows older!
The cause spreads over land and sea;
Now the world shaketh, and fear awaketh,
And joy at last for thee and me.
(1884)

## NO MASTER

Saith man to man, We've heard and known
  That we no master need
To live upon this earth our own,
  In fair and manly deed.
The grief of slaves long passed away
  For us hath forged the chain,
Till now each worker's patient day
  Builds up the House of Pain.

And we, shall we too, crouch and quail,
  Ashamed, afraid of strife,
And lest our lives untimely fail
  Embrace the Death in Life?
Nay, cry aloud, and have no fear,
  We few against the world;
Awake, arise! the hope we bear
  Against the curse is hurled.

It grows and grows — are we the same,
  The feeble band, the few?
Or what are these with eyes aflame,
  And hands to deal and do?
This is the host that bears the word,
  "NO MASTER HIGH OR LOW" —
A lightning flame, a shearing sword,
  A storm to overthrow.
(1884)

## DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN

Come, comrades, come, your glasses clink;
Up with your hands a health to drink,
The health of all that workers be,
In every land, on every sea.
  And he that will this health deny,
  Down among the dead men, down among the dead men,
  Down, down, down, down,
  Down among the dead men let him lie!

Well done! Now drink another toast,
And pledge the gath'ring of the host,
The people armed in brain and hand,
To claim their rights in every land.
  And he that will, etc.

There's liquor left; come, let's be kind,
And drink the rich a better mind,
That when we knock upon the door,
They may be off and say no more.
  And he that will, etc.

Now, comrades, let the glass blush red,
Drink we the unforgotten dead
That did their deeds and went away,
Before the bright sun brought the day.
  And he that will, etc.

The Day? Ah, friends, late grows the night;
Drink to the glimmering spark of light,
The herald of the joy to be,
The battle-torch of thee and me!
  And he that will, etc.

Take yet another cup in hand
And drink in hope our little band;
Drink strife in hope while lasteth breath,
And brotherhood in life and death;
  And he that will, etc.
(1885)

## From *A DREAM OF JOHN BALL*

### The Sheriff

The Sheriff is made a mighty lord,
  Of goodly gold he hath enow,
And many a sergeant girt with sword;
  But forth will we and bend the bow.
    We shall bend the bow on the lily lea
    Betwixt the thorn and the oaken tree.

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*A Dream of John Ball.* See Critical Notes.

With stone and lime is the burg wall built,
And pit and prison are stark and strong,
And many a true man there is spilt,
And many a right man doomed by wrong.
So forth shall we and bend the bow
And the king's writ never the road shall know.

Now yeomen walk ye warily,
And heed ye the houses where ye go,
For as fair and as fine as they may be,
Lest behind your heels the door clap to.
Fare forth with the bow to the lily lea
Betwixt the thorn and the oaken tree.

Now bills and bows! and out a-gate!
And turn about on the lily lea!
And though their company be great
The gray-goose wing shall set us free.
Now bent is the bow in the green abode
And the king's writ knoweth not the road.

So over the mead and over the hithe,
And away to the wild-wood wend we forth;
There dwell we yeomen bold and blithe
Where the Sheriff's word is naught of worth.
Bent is the bow on the lily lea
Betwixt the thorn and the oaken tree.
(1886)

## THE DAY OF DAYS

Each eve earth falleth down the dark,
As though its hope were o'er;
Yet lurks the sun when day is done
Behind tomorrow's door.

Gray grows the dawn while men-folk sleep;
Unseen spreads on the light,
Till the thrush sings to the colored things,
And earth forgets the night.

No otherwise wends on our Hope —
E'en as a tale that's told
Are fair lives lost, and all the cost
Of wise and true and bold.

We've toiled and failed; we spake the word;
None harkened; dumb we lie;
Our Hope is dead, the seed we spread
Fell o'er the earth to die.

What's this? For joy our hearts stand still,
And life is loved and dear,
The lost and found the Cause hath crowned,
The Day of Days is here.
(1890)

## THE BURGHERS' BATTLE

Thick rise the spear-shafts o'er the land
That erst the harvest bore;
The sword is heavy in the hand,
*And we return no more.*

The light wind waves the Ruddy Fox,
Our banner of the war,
And ripples in the Running Ox,
*And we return no more.*

Across our stubble acres now
The teams go four and four;
But out-worn elders guide the plow,
*And we return no more.*

And now the women, heavy-eyed,
Turn through the open door
From gazing down the highway wide,
*Where we return no more.*

The shadows of the fruited close
Dapple the feast-hall floor;
There lie our dogs and dream and doze,
*And we return no more.*

Down from the minster tower today
Fall the soft chimes of yore
Amidst the chattering jackdaws' play;
*And we return no more.*

But underneath the streets are still;
Noon, and the market's o'er!
Back go the goodwives o'er the hill;
*For we return no more.*

What merchant to our gates shall come?
What wise man bring us lore?
What abbot ride away to Rome,
*Now we return no more?*

What mayor shall rule the hall we built?
Whose scarlet sweep the floor?
What judge shall doom the robber's guilt,
*Now we return no more?*

New houses in the streets shall rise
Where builded we before,
Of other stone wrought otherwise;
*For we return no more.*

And crops shall cover field and hill
Unlike what once they bore,
And all be done without our will,
*Now we return no more.*

---

19. **bills,** battle weapons consisting of a long staff with a hook-shaped blade on the end. 22. **gray-goose wing,** arrow. 25. **hithe,** dale.

17. **fruited close,** orchard. 27. **goodwives.** A goodwife was a mistress of a house. The term was formerly used as an appellation of civility, like our *Mrs.* 35. **doom,** judge.

Look up! the arrows streak the sky,
The horns of battle roar;
The long spears lower and draw nigh,
*And we return no more.*

Remember how beside the wain,
We spoke the word of war,
And sowed this harvest of the plain,
*And we return no more.*

Lay spears about the Ruddy Fox!
The days of old are o'er;
Heave sword about the Running Ox!
*For we return no more.* (1891)

## TO THE MUSE OF THE NORTH

O muse that swayest the sad Northern Song,
Thy right hand full of smiting and of wrong,
Thy left hand holding pity, and thy breast
Heaving with hope of that so certain rest;
Thou, with the gray eyes kind and unafraid,
The soft lips trembling not, though they have said
The doom of the World and those that dwell therein,
The lips that smile not though thy children win
The fated Love that draws the fated Death —
O, borne adown the fresh stream of thy breath,
Let some word reach my ears and touch my heart,
That, if it may be, I may have a part
In that great sorrow of thy children dead
That vexed the brow, and bowed adown the head,
Whitened the hair, made life a wondrous dream,
And death the murmur of a restful stream,
But left no stain upon those souls of thine
Whose greatness through the tangled world doth shine.
O Mother, and Love and Sister all in one,
Come thou; for sure I am enough alone
That thou thine arms about my heart shouldst throw,
And wrap me in the grief of long ago. (1891)

## ICELAND FIRST SEEN

Lo, from our loitering ship a new land at last to be seen;
Toothed rocks down the side of the firth on the east guard a weary wide lea,
And black slope the hillsides above, striped adown with their desolate green;
And a peak rises up on the west from the meeting of cloud and of sea,
Foursquare from base unto point like the building of gods that have been,
The last of that waste of the mountains all cloud-wreathed and snow-flecked and gray,
And bright with the dawn that began just now at the ending of day.

Ah! what came we forth for to see that our hearts are so hot with desire?
Is it enough for our rest the sight of this desolate strand,
And the mountain-waste voiceless as death but for winds that may sleep not nor tire?

Why do we long to wend forth through the length and breadth of a land,
Dreadful with grinding of ice, and record of scarce hidden fire,
But that there 'mid the gray grassy dales sore scarred by the ruining streams
Lives the tale of the Northland of old and the undying glory of dreams?

O land, as some cave by the sea where the treasures of old have been laid,
The sword it may be of a king whose name was the turning of fight;
Or the staff of some wise of the world that many things made and unmade,
Or the ring of a woman maybe whose woe is grown wealth and delight.
No wheat and no wine grows above it, no orchard for blossom and shade;
The few ships that sail by its blackness but deem it the mouth of a grave;
Yet sure when the world shall awaken, this too shall be mighty to save.

Or rather, O land, if a marvel it seemeth that men ever sought
Thy wastes for a field and a garden fulfilled of all wonder and doubt,
And feasted amidst of the winter when the fight of the year had been fought,
Whose plunder all gathered together was little to babble about —
Cry aloud from thy wastes, O thou land, "Not for this nor for that was I wrought
Amid waning of realms and of riches and death of things worshiped and sure;
I abide here the spouse of a god, and I made and I make and endure."

O Queen of the grief without knowledge, of the courage that may not avail,
Of the longing that may not attain, or the love that shall never forget,

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*To the Muse of the North.* This poem emphasizes the important place that Fate held among the early Teutonic people. The Scandinavian Norns were the dispensers of fate in Norse mythology. The poem also stresses Morris's interest in Scandinavian material.

*Iceland First Seen.* Morris visited Iceland in 1871 and again in 1873.

More joy than the gladness of laughter thy voice hath amidst of its wail;
More hope than of pleasure fulfilled amidst of thy blindness is set;
More glorious than gaining of all, thine unfaltering hand that shall fail;
For what is the mark on thy brow but the brand that thy Brynhild doth bear?
Lone once, and loved and undone by a love that no ages outwear.

Ah! when thy Balder comes back, and bears from the heart of the Sun,
Peace and the healing of pain, and the wisdom that waiteth no more;
And the lilies are laid on thy brow 'mid the crown of the deeds thou hast done;
And the roses spring up by thy feet that the rocks of the wilderness wore —
Ah! when thy Balder comes back and we gather the gains he hath won,
Shall we not linger a little to talk of thy sweetness of old,
Yea, turn back awhile to thy travail whence the gods stood aloof to behold? (1891)

## A DEATH SONG

What cometh here from west to east a-wending?
And who are these, the marchers stern and slow?
We bear the message that the rich are sending
Aback to those who bade them wake and know.
*Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,*
*But one and all if they would dusk the day.*

We asked them for a life of toilsome earning —
They bade us bide their leisure for our bread;
We craved to speak to tell our woeful learning —
We come back speechless, bearing back our dead.
*Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,*
*But one and all if they would dusk the day.*

They will not learn; they have no ears to hearken;
They turn their faces from the eyes of fate;
Their gay-lit halls shut out the skies that darken.
But, lo! this dead man knocking at the gate.
*Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,*
*But one and all if they would dusk the day.*

Here lies the sign that we shall break our prison;
Amidst the storm he won a prisoner's rest;
But in the cloudy dawn the sun arisen
Brings us our day of work to win the best.
*Not one, not one, nor thousands must they slay,*
*But one and all if they would dusk the day.*
(1891)

## AGNES AND THE HILL-MAN

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH

Agnes went through the meadows a-weeping,
*Fowl are a-singing.*
There stood the hill-man, heed thereof keeping.
*Agnes, fair Agnes!*
"Come to the hill, fair Agnes, with me;
The reddest of gold will I give unto thee!"

Twice went Agnes the hill round about,
Then wended within, left the fair world without.

In the hillside bode Agnes, three years thrice told o'er,
For the green earth sithence fell she longing full sore.

There she sat, and lullaby sang in her singing,
And she heard how the bells of England were ringing.

Agnes before her true-love did stand:
"May I wend to the church of the English Land?"

"To England's Church well mayst thou be gone,
So that no hand thou lay the red gold upon.

"So that when thou art come the churchyard anear
Thou cast not abroad thy golden hair.

"So that when thou standest the church within
To thy mother on bench thou never win.

"So that when thou hearest the high God's name,
No knee unto earth thou bow to the same."

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34. **Brynhild.** See *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung*, page 641, and note on lines 103-104, page 643. 36. **Balder,** son of Odin, and the Norse god of light and peace.

*A Death Song.* This poem was written to be sold as a penny pamphlet to aid the children of Morris's friend Alfred Linnell, who died from injuries received when the police attacked marchers in a great Socialist parade in London, November 13, 1887. Morris was one of the marchers.

*Agnes and the Hill-Man.* The hill-man is a kind of dwarf or troll living in the side of a hill. He belongs to the realm of folklore. Compare the poem with Arnold's *The Forsaken Merman*, page 428.

10. **sithence,** afterwards. 20. **win,** go.

Hand she laid on all gold that was there,
And cast abroad her golden hair.

And when the church she stood within
To her mother on bench straight did she win.

And when she heard the high God's name,
Knee unto earth she bowed to the same.

When all the Mass was sung to its end
Home with her mother dear did she wend.

"Come, Agnes, into the hillside to me,
For thy seven small sons greet sorely for thee!"

"Let them greet, let them greet, as they will have to do;
For never again will I hearken thereto!"

Weird laid he on her, sore sickness he wrought,
*Fowl are a-singing.*
That selfsame hour to death was she brought.
*Agnes, fair Agnes.* (1891)

### FOR THE BED AT KELMSCOTT

The wind's on the wold
And the night is a-cold,
And Thames runs chill
Twixt mead and hill;
But kind and dear
Is the old house here,
And my heart is warm
Midst winter's harm.

Rest, then, and rest,
And think of the best
'Twixt summer and spring,
When all birds sing
In the town of the tree,
And ye lie in me
And scarce dare move,
Lest the earth and its love
Should fade away
Ere the full of the day.

I am old and have seen
Many things that have been —
Both grief and peace
And wane and increase.
No tale I tell
Of ill or well,
But this I say:
Night treadeth on day,
And for worst or best
Right good is rest. (*1893;* 1893)

## ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

(1837-1909)

### A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER

1852

Push hard across the sand,
For the salt wind gathers breath;
Shoulder and wrist and hand,
Push hard as the push of death.

The wind is as iron that rings,
The foam-heads loosen and flee;
It swells and welters and swings,
The pulse of the tide of the sea.

And up on the yellow cliff
The long corn flickers and shakes;
Push, for the wind holds stiff,
And the gunwale dips and rakes.

Good hap to the fresh fierce weather,
The quiver and beat of the sea!
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

Out to the sea with her there,
Out with her over the sand;
Let the kings keep the earth for their share!
We have done with the sharers of land.

They have tied the world in a tether,
They have bought over God with a fee;
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

We have done with the kisses that sting,
The thief's mouth red from the feast,
The blood on the hands of the king
And the lie at the lips of the priest.

Will they tie the winds in a tether,
Put a bit in the jaws of the sea?
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

Let our flag run out straight in the wind!
The old red shall be floated again

---

30. **wend,** go. 32. **greet,** weep. 35. **Weird,** fate; a spell.
*For the Bed at Kelmscott.* This poem was written for the embroidered hangings that belonged to a carved oak bedstead at Kelmscott Manor, Morris's home in Lechlade, about thirty miles above Oxford. The poem first appeared in the Catalogue of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, 1893. The old bedstead is the speaker.

*A Song in Time of Order.* See Critical Notes.
10. **corn,** grain, wheat. 34. **The old red,** the flag of the Revolution.

When the ranks that are thin shall be thinned,
When the names that were twenty are ten;

When the devil's riddle is mastered
And the galley-bench creaks with a pope,
We shall see Buonaparte the bastard
Kick heels with his throat in a rope.

While the shepherd sets wolves on his sheep
And the emperor halters his kine,
While Shame is a watchman asleep
And Faith is a keeper of swine,

Let the wind shake our flag like a feather,
Like the plumes of the foam of the sea!
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three.

All the world has its burdens to bear,
From Cayenne to the Austrian whips;
Forth, with the rain in our hair
And the salt sweet foam in our lips;

In the teeth of the hard glad weather,
In the blown wet face of the sea;
While three men hold together,
The kingdoms are less by three. (1862)

## FAUSTINE

*Ave Faustina Imperatrix morituri te salutant*

Lean back, and get some minutes' peace;
Let your head lean
Back to the shoulder with its fleece
Of locks, Faustine.

The shapely silver shoulder stoops,
Weighted over clean
With state of splendid hair that droops
Each side, Faustine.

Let me go over your good gifts
That crown you queen,
A queen whose kingdom ebbs and shifts
Each week, Faustine:

Bright heavy brows well gathered up—
White gloss and sheen;
Carved lips that make my lips a cup
To drink, Faustine,

Wine and rank poison, milk and blood,
Being mixed therein
Since first the devil threw dice with God
For you, Faustine.

Your naked new-born soul, their stake,
Stood blind between;
God said, "Let him that wins her take
And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan throve, no doubt;
Long since, I ween,
God's part in you was battered out—
Long since, Faustine.

The die rang sideways as it fell,
Rang cracked and thin,
Like a man's laughter heard in hell
Far down, Faustine.

A shadow of laughter like a sigh,
Dead sorrow's kin;
So rang, thrown down, the devil's die
That won Faustine.

A suckling of his breed you were,
One hard to wean;
But God, who lost you, left you fair,
We see, Faustine.

You have the face that suits a woman
For her soul's screen—
The sort of beauty that's called human
In hell, Faustine.

You could do all things but be good
Or chaste of mien;
And that you would not if you could,
We know, Faustine.

Even He who cast seven devils out
Of Magdalene
Could hardly do as much, I doubt,
For you, Faustine.

Did Satan make you to spite God?
Or did God mean
To scourge with scorpions for a rod
Our sins, Faustine?

I know what queen at first you were,
As though I had seen

38. **a pope,** Pius IX (1846-78), who was driven from Rome during the Italian Revolution of 1848 and who returned in 1850 by the aid of foreign arms. Swinburne wanted him sentenced to the galleys. 39. **Buonaparte the bastard,** Napoleon III, emperor of the French (1852-70), who is called a bastard because as president of the Republic (1848-52) he overthrew the old constitution and made a new one that gave him unlimited power. He was thus an illegitimate emperor. 50. **Cayenne,** the capital of French Guiana, used as a place of banishment for political prisoners. **Austrian whips,** a reference to the Austrian oppression of Italy during the period.

*Faustine.* See Critical Notes.

**Ave Faustina, etc.** Hail, Faustina, Empress, those about to die salute thee. This is adapted from the traditional words of the Roman gladiators about to engage in mortal combat: "Hail Cæsar, Emperor! those about to die salute thee!"

50. **Magdalene.** See Rossetti's *Mary Magdalene,* p. 525. 57. **what queen . . . were,** a reference to Faustina (105-141 A.D.), the wife of the Roman Emperor Antonius. She was notorious for her licentiousness. Her daughter, also named Faustina, was the wife of Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor (161-180). She is said to have been more profligate than her mother.

Red gold and black imperious hair
  Twice crown Faustine.

As if your fed sarcophagus
  Spared flesh and skin,
You come back face to face with us,
  The same Faustine.

She loved the games men played with death,
  Where death must win;
As though the slain man's blood and breath
  Revived Faustine.

Nets caught the pike, pikes tore the net;
  Lithe limbs and lean
From drained-out pores dripped thick red sweat
  To soothe Faustine.

She drank the steaming drift and dust
  Blown off the scene;
Blood could not ease the bitter lust
  That galled Faustine.

All round the foul fat furrows reeked,
  Where blood sank in;
The circus splashed and seethed and shrieked
  All round Faustine.

But these are gone now; years entomb
  The dust and din;
Yea, even the bath's fierce reek and fume
  That slew Faustine.

Was life worth living then? and now
  Is life worth sin?
Where are the imperial years? and how
  Are you Faustine?

Your soul forgot her joys, forgot
  Her times of teen;
Yea, this life likewise will you not
  Forget, Faustine?

For in the time we know not of
  Did fate begin
Weaving the web of days that wore
  Your doom, Faustine.

The threads were wet with wine, and all
  Were smooth to spin;
They wove you like a Bacchanal,
  The first Faustine.

And Bacchus cast your mates and you
  Wild grapes to glean;
Your flower-like lips were dashed with dew
  From his, Faustine.

Your drenched loose hands were stretched to hold
  The vine's wet green,
Long ere they coined in Roman gold
  Your face, Faustine.

Then after change of soaring feather
  And winnowing fin,
You woke in weeks of feverish weather,
  A new Faustine.

A star upon your birthday burned,
  Whose fierce serene
Red pulseless planet never yearned
  In heaven, Faustine.

Stray breaths of Sapphic song that blew
  Through Mitylene
Shook the fierce quivering blood in you
  By night, Faustine.

The shameless nameless love that makes
  Hell's iron gin
Shut on you like a trap that breaks
  The soul, Faustine.

And when your veins were void and dead,
  What ghosts unclean
Swarmed round the straitened barren bed
  That hid Faustine?

What sterile growths of sexless root
  Or epicene?
What flower of kisses without fruit
  Of love, Faustine?

What adders came to shed their coats?
  What coiled obscene
Small serpents with soft stretching throats
  Caressed Faustine?

But the time came of famished hours,
  Maimed loves and mean,
This ghastly thin-faced time of ours,
  To spoil Faustine.

You seem a thing that hinges hold,
  A love-machine
With clockwork joints of supple gold—
  No more, Faustine.

Not godless, for you serve one god,
  The Lampsacene,

---

90. **teen,** sorrow, grief. 99. **Bacchanal,** a devotee of Bacchus, god of wine.

117. **Sapphic song,** poetry of Sappho, a noted Greek poetess (c. 600 B.C.), famous for the erotic quality of her verse. She was born in the city of Mitylene, on the island of Lesbos, off the coast of Asia Minor. 122. **gin,** engine of torture. 130. **epicene,** common to both sexes. 146. **Lampsacene,** Priapus, the Greek god of fertility and gardens. In later times he was regarded as the chief deity of lasciviousness and obscenity. His worship began in the city of Lampsacus, in Asia Minor.

Who metes the gardens with his rod;
  Your lord, Faustine.

If one should love you with real love
  (Such things have been,
Things your fair face knows nothing of,
  It seems, Faustine);

That clear hair heavily bound back,
  The lights wherein
Shift from dead blue to burnt-up black;
  Your throat, Faustine,

Strong, heavy, throwing out the face
  And hard bright chin
And shameful scornful lips that grace
  Their shame, Faustine,

Curled lips, long since half kissed away,
  Still sweet and keen;
You'd give him—poison shall we say?
  Or what, Faustine? (1862)

## From *ATALANTA IN CALYDON*

### INVOCATION

Maiden, and mistress of the months and stars
Now folded in the flowerless fields of heaven,
Goddess whom all gods love with threefold heart,
Being treble in thy divided deity,
A light for dead men and dark hours, a foot
Swift on the hills as morning, and a hand
To all things fierce and fleet that roar and range
Mortal, with gentler shafts than snow or sleep—
Hear now and help and lift no violent hand,
But favorable and fair as thine eye's beam
Hidden and shown in heaven; for I all night
Amid the king's hounds and the hunting men
Have wrought and worshiped toward thee; nor shall man
See goodlier hounds or deadlier edge of spears;
But for the end, that lies unreached as yet
Between the hands and on the knees of gods.
O fair-faced sun, killing the stars and dews
And dreams and desolation of the night!
Rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out, with thy bow
Touch the most dimmest height of trembling heaven,
And burn and break the dark about thy ways,
Shot through and through with arrows; let thine hair
Lighten as flame above that flameless shell
Which was the moon, and thine eyes fill the world
And thy lips kindle with swift beams; let earth
Laugh, and the long sea fiery from thy feet
Through all the roar and ripple of streaming springs
And foam in reddening flakes and flying flowers
Shaken from hands and blown from lips of nymphs
Whose hair or breast divides the wandering wave
With salt close tresses cleaving lock to lock,
All gold, or shuddering and unfurrowed snow;
And all the winds about thee with their wings,
And fountain-heads of all the watered world;
Each horn of Acheloüs, and the green
Euenus, wedded with the straitening sea.
For in fair time thou comest; come also thou,
Twin-born with him, and virgin, Artemis,
And give our spears their spoil, the wild boar's hide,
Sent in thine anger against us for sin done
And bloodless altars without wine or fire.
Him now consume thou; for thy sacrifice
With sanguine-shining steam divides the dawn,
And one, the maiden rose of all thy maids,
Arcadian Atalanta, snowy-souled,
Fair as the snow and footed as the wind,
From Ladon and well-wooded Mænalus
Over the firm hills and the fleeting sea
Hast thou drawn hither, and many an armèd king,
Heroes, the crown of men, like gods in fight.
Moreover out of all the Ætolian land,
From the full-flowered Lelantian pasturage
To what of fruitful field the son of Zeus
Won from the roaring river and laboring sea
When the wild god shrank in his horn and fled
And foamed and lessened through his wrathful fords,
Leaving clear lands that steamed with sudden sun,

---

*Atalanta in Calydon.* See Critical Notes.
1. **Maiden . . . stars**, Artemis, goddess of maidenhood and of the moon. She was often mentioned as having a threefold form—Luna in the sky, Diana on earth, and Hecate in Hades. 8. **Mortal**, deadly; the word refers to *hand* (line 6). 17. **fair-faced sun**, Apollo, god of the sun. One of his attributes was the bow.

28. **foam**, a verb parallel with *laugh* understood. The construction is: Let earth laugh, the long sea laugh and foam, the winds laugh (line 33), etc. 32. **shuddering**, refers to *breast* (line 30). 35. **Acheloüs**, a river in western Greece 36. **Euenus**, a river in western Greece; it flows into the Ionian Sea where it narrows at the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth. 38. **Twin-born.** Apollo and Artemis were twin children of Zeus and Leto. 45. **Atalanta**, a maiden of Arcadia, Greece, famous for her beauty and her fleetness of foot. 47. **Ladon**, a river in Arcadia. **Mænalus**, a mountain in Arcadia. 51. **Ætolian land**, Ætolia, in western Greece, the province in which Calydon was located. 52. **Lelantian pasturage**, a region at the mouth of the River Euenus. 53. **son of Zeus**, etc., Hercules, who defeated the river god Acheloüs in a combat over Dejanira of Calydon, whom they both loved. Acheloüs, who assumed the form of a bull, lost one of his horns in the fight.

antithesis
alliteration

These virgins with the lightening of the day
Bring thee fresh wreaths and their own sweeter hair,
Luxurious locks and flower-like mixed with flowers,
Clean offering, and chaste hymns; but me the time
Divides from these things; whom do thou not less
Help and give honor, and to mine hounds good speed,
And edge to spears, and luck to each man's hand. (1865)

### When the Hounds of Spring

connotation + atmosphere
appeal to the senses

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
Oh, that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.
(1865)

### Before the Beginning of Years

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

---

58. **These virgins**, maidens of Ætolia who form the chorus of the drama.

*When the Hounds of Spring*. This is the opening chorus of the drama, sung by a group of Ætolian maidens; it follows the Invocation.

2. **mother of months**, Artemis, goddess of the moon. 6. **Itylus**. See note on Arnold's *Philomela*, page 470.

28. **light . . . wins**, a reference to the short days and long nights of winter. 38. **oat**, the shepherd's pipe of oaten straw. 39. **satyr**, a sylvan demigod, half man and half goat. 41. **Pan**, god of flocks and pastures. **Bacchus**, god of wine. 44. **Mænad**, a female worshiper of Bacchus. The name is derived from a Greek word meaning *to be frenzied*. **Bassarid**, a Thracian worshiper of Bacchus. The celebrations of the Bassarids included licentious excesses and a sacrifice of some animal on the altar of the god. The participants ate the flesh raw. 47-48. **screen . . . hid**. As the god and the maiden slip through the forest, they are alternately concealed and revealed by the wind-swayed foliage.

*Before the Beginning of Years*. This song is sung by the Chorus after Althæa had departed to prepare her son Meleager for the hunt, "lest love or some man's anger work him harm."

And the high gods took in hand
  Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
  From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
  And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
  In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
  And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
  And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
  That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
  The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
  They gathered as unto strife;
  They breathed upon his mouth,
  They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
  For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labor and thought,
  A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
  And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
  And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;
  With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart is a blind desire,
  In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
  Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
  Between a sleep and a sleep. (1865)

### WE HAVE SEEN THEE, O LOVE

We have seen thee, O Love; thou art fair; thou art goodly, O Love;
Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of a dove.
Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream of the sea;
Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment of thee.
Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flame of fire;
Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of desire;
And twain go forth beside thee, a man with a maid;
Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom delight makes afraid;
As the breath in the buds that stir is her bridal breath;
But Fate is the name of her; and his name is Death. (1865)

### NOT AS WITH SUNDERING OF THE EARTH

Not as with sundering of the earth,
  Nor as the cleaving of the sea,
Nor fierce foreshadowings of a birth,
  Nor flying dreams of death to be,
Nor loosening of the large world's girth
And quickening of the body of night,
  And sound of thunder in men's ears,
And fire of lightning in men's sight,
  Fate, mother of desires and fears,
  Bore unto men the law of tears;
But sudden, an unfathered flame,
  And broken out of night, she shone,
She, without body, without name,
  In days forgotten and foregone;
And heaven rang round her as she came,
Like smitten cymbals, and lay bare;
  Clouds and great stars, thunders and snows,
The blue sad fields and folds of air,
  The life that breathes, the life that grows,
  All wind, all fire, that burns or blows,
Even all these knew her — for she is great;
  The daughter of doom, the mother of death,
The sister of sorrow; a lifelong weight
  That no man's finger lighteneth,
Nor any god can lighten fate;
A landmark seen across the way
  Where one race treads as the other trod;
An evil scepter, an evil stay,
  Wrought for a staff, wrought for a rod,
  The bitter jealousy of God.

For death is deep as the sea,
  And fate as the waves thereof.
Shall the waves take pity on thee
  Or the south-wind offer thee love?
Wilt thou take the night for thy day
Or the darkness for light on thy way,
  Till thou say in thine heart, Enough?

Behold, thou art over-fair, thou art over-wise;
The sweetness of spring in thine hair, and the light in thine eyes.
The light of the spring in thine eyes, and the sound in thine ears;
Yet thine heart shall wax heavy with sighs and thine eyelids with tears.
Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold, and with silver thy feet?

---

*We Have Seen Thee, O Love.* These are the opening lines of a chorus on the coming of Love in the form of Aphrodite. The first two lines are from *The Song of Solomon*, 4:1.—"Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks."

*Not As with Sundering of the Earth.* This song is sung by the Chorus after Althæa has determined to sacrifice her son for killing her brothers.

9. **Fate.** According to the Greeks, fate was the necessity behind and above gods as well as men.

Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee, and made thy mouth sweet?
Behold, when thy face is made bare, he that loved thee shall hate;
Thy face shall be no more fair at the fall of thy fate.
For thy life shall fall as a leaf and be shed as the rain;
And the veil of thine head shall be grief; and the crown shall be pain. (1865)

### The Death of Meleager

*Meleager*

Let your hands meet
Round the weight of my head;
Lift ye my feet
As the feet of the dead;
For the flesh of my body is molten, the limbs of it molten as lead.

*Chorus*

O thy luminous face,
Thine imperious eyes!
O the grief, O the grace,
As of day when it dies!
Who is this bending over thee, lord, with tears and suppression of sighs?

*Meleager*

Is a bride so fair?
Is a maid so meek?
With unchapleted hair,
With unfilleted cheek,
Atalanta, the pure among women, whose name is as blessing to speak.

*Atalanta*

I would that with feet
Unsandaled, unshod,
Overbold, overfleet,
I had swum not nor trod
From Arcadia to Calydon, northward, a blast of the envy of God.

*Meleager*

Unto each man his fate;
Unto each as he saith
In whose fingers the weight
Of the world is as breath;
Yet I would that in clamor of battle mine hands had laid hold upon death.

*Chorus*

Not with cleaving of shields
And their clash in thine ear,
When the lord of fought fields
Breaketh spearshaft from spear,
Thou art broken, our lord, thou art broken, with travail and labor and fear.

*Meleager*

Would God he had found me
Beneath fresh boughs!
Would God he had bound me
Unawares in mine house,
With light in mine eyes, and songs in my lips, and a crown on my brows!

*Chorus*

Whence art thou sent from us?
Whither thy goal?
How art thou rent from us,
Thou that wert whole,
As with severing of eyelids and eyes, as with sundering of body and soul!

*Meleager*

My heart is within me
As an ash in the fire;
Whosoever hath seen me,
Without lute, without lyre,
Shall sing of me grievous things, even things that were ill to desire.

*Chorus*

Who shall raise thee
From the house of the dead?
Or what man praise thee
That thy praise may be said?
Alas thy beauty! alas thy body! alas thine head!

*Meleager*

But thou, O mother,
The dreamer of dreams,
Wilt thou bring forth another
To feel the sun's beams
When I move among shadows a shadow, and wail by impassable streams?

*Œneus*

What thing wilt thou leave me
Now this thing is done?
A man wilt thou give me,
A son for my son,
For the light of mine eyes, the desire of my life, the desirable one?

*Chorus*

Thou wert glad above others,
Yea, fair beyond word;
Thou wert glad among mothers;
For each man that heard
Of thee, praise there was added unto thee, as wings to the feet of a bird.

---

*The Death of Meleager.* This incident occurs after Althæa throws the brand into the fire. See Critical Note on title.

11-15. **bride . . . Atalanta.** A bride with her chaplet or garland worn on her head, and a maiden with her fillet or band of ribbon around her forehead, are not so fair or so meek as Atalanta, who wears neither decoration.

*Œneus*

Who shall give back
Thy face of old years
With travail made black,
Grown gray among fears,
Mother of sorrow, mother of cursing, mother of tears?

*Meleager*

Though thou art as fire
Fed with fuel in vain,
My delight, my desire,
Is more chaste than the rain,
More pure than the dewfall, more holy than stars are that live without stain.

*Atalanta*

I would that as water
My life's blood had thawn,
Or as winter's wan daughter
Leaves lowland and lawn
Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had beheld thee made dark in thy dawn.

*Chorus*

When thou dravest the men
Of the chosen of Thrace,
None turned him again
Nor endured he thy face
Clothed round with the blush of the battle, with light from a terrible place.

*Œneus*

Thou shouldst die as he dies
For whom none sheddeth tears;
Filling thine eyes
And fulfilling thine ears
With the brilliance of battle, the bloom and the beauty, the splendor of spears.

*Chorus*

In the ears of the world
It is sung, it is told,
And the light thereof hurled
And the noise thereof rolled
From the Acroceraunian snow to the ford of the fleece of gold.

*Meleager*

Would God ye could carry me
Forth of all these;
Heap sand and bury me
By the Chersonese
Where the thundering Bosphorus answers the thunder of Pontic seas.

*Œneus*

Dost thou mock at our praise
And the singing begun
And the men of strange days
Praising my son
In the folds of the hills of home, high places of Calydon?

*Meleager*

For the dead man no home is;
Ah, better to be
What the flower of the foam is
In fields of the sea,
That the sea-waves might be as my raiment, the gulf-stream a garment for me.

*Chorus*

Who shall seek thee and bring
And restore thee thy day,
When the dove dipped her wing
And the oars won their way
Where the narrowing Symplegades whitened the straits of Propontis with spray?

*Meleager*

Will ye crown me my tomb
Or exalt me my name,
Now my spirits consume,
Now my flesh is a flame?
Let the sea slake it once, and men speak of me sleeping to praise me or shame.

*Chorus*

Turn back now, turn thee,
As who turns him to wake;
Though the life in thee burn thee,
Couldst thou bathe it and slake
Where the sea-ridge of Helle hangs heavier, and east upon west waters break?

*Meleager*

Would the winds blow me back
Or the waves hurl me home?
Ah, to touch in the track
Where the pine learned to roam
Cold girdles and crowns of the sea-gods, cool blossoms of water and foam!

*Chorus*

The gods may release
That they made fast;
Thy soul shall have ease

---

77. **thawn**, become thin. 95. **From . . . gold**, from one end of the Greek world to the other. The Acroceraunian Mountains are on the west coast of Epirus, in northwestern Greece. The ford of the fleece of gold is the Hellespont. See Critical Note on *The Life and Death of Jason*. 99-100. **Chersonese . . . seas.** Meleager desired to be buried as far away as possible from the scene of his death. The Chersonese was a peninsula north of the Hellespont; it is modern Gallipoli. The Bosphorus (line 100) is a strait connecting the Black Sea (Pontic Sea, line 100) with the Sea of Marmora.

115. **Symplegades**, two rocks at the entrance of the Black Sea. They clashed together at intervals, but remained apart when the Argonauts passed through on their quest for the Golden Fleece. **Propontis**, the Sea of Marmora. 125. **Helle**, the Hellespont.

In thy limbs at the last;
But what shall they give thee for life, sweet life that is overpast?

*Meleager*

Not the life of men's veins,
Not of flesh that conceives;
But the grace that remains,
The fair beauty that cleaves
To the life of the rains in the grasses, the life of the dews on the leaves.

*Chorus*

Thou wert helmsman and chief;
Wilt thou turn in an hour,
Thy limbs to the leaf,
Thy face to the flower,
Thy blood to the water, thy soul to the gods who divide and devour?

*Meleager*

The years are hungry,
They wail all their days;
The gods wax angry
And weary of praise;
And who shall bridle their lips? and who shall straighten their ways?

*Chorus*

The gods guard over us
With sword and with rod;
Weaving shadow to cover us,
Heaping the sod,
That law may fulfill herself wholly, to darken man's face before God.

(1865)

## From *CHASTELARD*

### Between the Sunset and the Sea

Between the sunset and the sea
My love laid hands and lips on me;
Of sweet came sour, of day came night,
Of long desire came brief delight.
Ah, love, and what thing came of thee
Between the sea-downs and the sea?

Between the sea-mark and the sea
Joy grew to grief, grief grew to me;
Love turned to tears, and tears to fire,
And dead delight to new desire;
Love's talk, love's touch there seemed to be
Between the sea-sand and the sea.

Between the sundown and the sea
Love watched one hour of love with me;
Then down the all-golden waterways
His feet flew after yesterdays;
I saw them come and saw them flee
Between the sea-foam and the sea.

Between the sea-strand and the sea
Love fell on sleep, sleep fell on me;
The first star saw twain turn to one
Between the moonrise and the sun;
The next, that saw not love, saw me
Between the sea-banks and the sea.

(1865)

## A BALLAD OF LIFE

I found in dreams a place of wind and flowers,
Full of sweet trees and color of glad grass,
In midst whereof there was
A lady clothed like summer with sweet hours.
Her beauty, fervent as a fiery moon,
Made my blood burn and swoon
Like a flame rained upon.
Sorrow had filled her shaken eyelids' blue,
And her mouth's sad red heavy rose all through
Seemed sad with glad things gone.

She held a little cithern by the strings,
Shaped heartwise, strung with subtle-colored hair
Of some dead lute player
That in dead years had done delicious things.
The seven strings were named accordingly:
The first string charity,
The second tenderness;
The rest were pleasure, sorrow, sleep, and sin,
And loving-kindness, that is pity's kin
And is most pitiless.

There were three men with her, each garmented
With gold and shod with gold upon the feet;
And with plucked ears of wheat
The first man's hair was wound upon his head.
His face was red, and his mouth curled and sad;
All his gold garment had
Pale stains of dust and rust.
A riven hood was pulled across his eyes;

---

155. **law . . . God.** At Mt. Sinai (*Exodus*, 19), the people were forbidden to look upon the presence of God concealed in darkness on the Mount.

*Chastelard. Chastelard* is the first of a series of three tragedies on Mary, Queen of Scots. Mary Beaton, one of the Queen's ladies, in love with Chastelard, sang the lyric given here. Pierre de Boscosel de Chastelard was a French poet at the court of Queen Mary, with whom he was violently in love. He had followed her to Scotland from France in 1561. His intrigue with Mary cost him his life in 1563.

*A Ballad of Life.* This poem and *A Ballad of Death* (page 663), with their ornateness of style and wealth of sensuous beauty, illustrate the influence of the Pre-Raphaelite movement upon the early work of Swinburne. See Critical Note on the Pre-Raphaelites (under Rossetti).

11. **cithern,** a kind of stringed instrument.

The token of him being upon this wise
Made for a sign of Lust.

The next was Shame, with hollow heavy face
Colored like green wood when flame kindles it.
He hath such feeble feet
They may not well endure in any place.
His face was full of gray old miseries,
And all his blood's increase
Was even increase of pain.
The last was Fear, that is akin to Death;
He is Shame's friend, and always as Shame saith
Fear answers him again.

My soul said in me: This is marvelous,
Seeing the air's face is not so delicate
Nor the sun's grace so great,
If sin and she be kin or amorous.
And seeing where maidens served her on their knees,
I bade one crave of these
To know the cause thereof.
Then Fear said: I am Pity that was dead.
And Shame said: I am Sorrow comforted.
And Lust said: I am Love.

Thereat her hands began a lute-playing
And her sweet mouth a song in a strange tongue;
And all the while she sung
There was no sound but long tears following
Long tears upon men's faces, waxen white
With extreme sad delight.
But those three following men
Became as men raised up among the dead;
Great glad mouths open and fair cheeks made red
With child's blood come again.

Then I said: Now assuredly I see
My lady is perfect, and transfigureth
All sin and sorrow and death,
Making them fair as her own eyelids be,
Or lips wherein my whole soul's life abides;
Or as her sweet white sides
And bosom carved to kiss.
Now therefore, if her pity further me,
Doubtless for her sake all my days shall be
As righteous as she is.

Forth, ballad, and take roses in both arms,
Even till the top rose touch thee in the throat
Where the least thornprick harms;
And girdled in thy golden singing-coat,
Come thou before my lady and say this:
Borgia, thy gold hair's color burns in me,
Thy mouth makes beat my blood in feverish rimes;
Therefore so many as these roses be,
Kiss me so many times.
Then it may be, seeing how sweet she is,
That she will stoop herself none otherwise
Than a blown vine-branch doth,
And kiss thee with soft laughter on thine eyes,
Ballad, and on thy mouth. (1866)

## A BALLAD OF DEATH

Kneel down, fair Love, and fill thyself with tears,
Girdle thyself with sighing for a girth
Upon the sides of mirth,
Cover thy lips and eyelids, let thine ears
Be filled with rumor of people sorrowing;
Make thee soft raiment out of woven sighs
Upon the flesh to cleave,
Set pains therein and many a grievous thing,
And many sorrows after each his wise
For armlet and for gorget and for sleeve.

O Love's lute heard about the lands of death,
Left hanged upon the trees that were therein;
O Love and Time and Sin,
Three singing mouths that mourn now underbreath,
Three lovers, each one evil spoken of;
O smitten lips wherethrough this voice of mine
Came softer with her praise;
Abide a little for our lady's love.
The kisses of her mouth were more than wine,
And more than peace the passage of her days.

O Love, thou knowest if she were good to see.
O Time, thou shalt not find in any land,
Till, cast out of thine hand,
The sunlight and the moonlight fail from thee,
Another woman fashioned like as this.
O Sin, thou knowest that all thy shame in her
Was made a goodly thing;
Yea, she caught Shame and shamed him with her kiss,
With her fair kiss, and lips much lovelier
Than lips of amorous roses in late spring.

By night there stood over against my bed
Queen Venus with a hood striped gold and black,

---

71. **Forth,** go forth.

76. **Borgia,** Lucrezia di Borgia (1480-1519), daughter of Pope Alexander VI and wife of Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara. Although she was represented as a veritable monster of wickedness, as Duchess of Ferrara she was noted for her charm and beauty.

*A Ballad of Death.* 10. **gorget,** a neck covering or ornament. 19. **kisses . . . wine.** From *The Song of Solomon,* 1:2.—"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine." 32. **Queen Venus,** goddess of love. According to one tradition she was born of the sea-foam (line 36).

Both sides drawn fully back
From brows wherein the sad blood failed of red,
And temples drained of purple and full of death.
Her curled hair had the wave of sea-water
And the sea's gold in it.
Her eyes were as a dove's that sickeneth.
Strewn dust of gold she had shed over her,
And pearl and purple and amber on her feet.

Upon her raiment of dyed sendaline
Were painted all the secret ways of love
And covered things thereof,
That hold delight as grape-flowers hold their wine;
Red mouths of maidens and red feet of doves,
And brides that kept within the bride-chamber
Their garment of soft shame,
And weeping faces of the wearied loves
That swoon in sleep and awake wearier,
With heat of lips and hair shed out like flame.

The tears that through her eyelids fell on me
Made mine own bitter where they ran between
As blood had fallen therein,
She saying: Arise, lift up thine eyes and see
If any glad thing be or any good
Now the best thing is taken forth of us;
Even she to whom all praise
Was as one flower in a great multitude,
One glorious flower of many and glorious,
One day found gracious among many days;

Even she whose handmaiden was Love — to whom
At kissing times across her stateliest bed
Kings bowed themselves and shed
Pale wine, and honey with the honeycomb,
And spikenard bruised for a burnt-offering;
Even she between whose lips the kiss became
As fire and frankincense;
Whose hair was as gold raiment on a king,
Whose eyes were as the morning purged with flame,
Whose eyelids as sweet savor issuing thence.

Then I beheld, and lo, on the other side
My lady's likeness crowned and robed and dead.
Sweet still, but now not red,
Was the shut mouth whereby men lived and died.
And sweet, but emptied of the blood's blue shade,
The great curled eyelids that withheld her eyes.
And sweet, but like spoilt gold,
The weight of color in her tresses weighed.
And sweet, but as a vesture with new dyes,
The body that was clothed with love of old.

Ah! that my tears filled all her woven hair
And all the hollow bosom of her gown —
Ah! that my tears ran down
Even to the place where many kisses were,
Even where her parted breast-flowers have place,
Even where they are cloven apart — who knows not this?
Ah! the flowers cleave apart
And their sweet fills the tender interspace;
Ah! the leaves grown thereof were things to kiss
Ere their fine gold was tarnished at the heart.

Ah! in the days when God did good to me,
Each part about her was a righteous thing;
Her mouth an almsgiving,
The glory of her garments charity,
The beauty of her bosom a good deed,
In the good days when God kept sight of us;
Love lay upon her eyes,
And on that hair whereof the world takes heed;
And all her body was more virtuous
Than souls of women fashioned otherwise.

Now, ballad, gather poppies in thine hands
And sheaves of briar and many rusted sheaves
Rain-rotten in rank lands,
Waste marigold and late unhappy leaves
And grass that fades ere any of it be mown,
And when thy bosom is filled full thereof
Seek out Death's face ere the light altereth,
And say: "My master that was thrall to Love
Is become thrall to Death."
Bow down before him, ballad, sigh and groan,
But make no sojourn in thy outgoing;
For haply it may be
That when thy feet return at evening
Death shall come in with thee. (1866)

## LAUS VENERIS

Asleep or waking is it? for her neck,
Kissed over close, wears yet a purple speck
Wherein the pained blood falters and goes out;
Soft, and stung softly — fairer for a fleck.

---

41. **sendaline**, a light silk fabric used in the Middle Ages. 65. **spikenard**, a plant from which a costly fragrant ointment was made. 67. **frankincense**, a fragrant ointment valued by the ancients for fumigation, embalming, etc.

*Laus Veneris.* The title means *Praise of Venus.* Cf. *Hymn to Proserpine*, page 676; see, also, Critical Notes.

But though my lips shut sucking on the place,
There is no vein at work upon her face;
Her eyelids are so peaceable, no doubt
Deep sleep has warmed her blood through all its ways.

Lo, this is she that was the world's delight;
The old gray years were parcels of her might;
The strewings of the ways wherein she trod
Were the twain seasons of the day and night.

Lo, she was thus when her clear limbs enticed
All lips that now grow sad with kissing Christ,
Stained with blood fallen from the feet of God,
The feet and hands whereat our souls were priced.

Alas, Lord, surely thou art great and fair.
But, lo, her wonderfully woven hair!
And thou didst heal us with thy piteous kiss;
But see now, Lord, her mouth is lovelier.

She is right fair; what hath she done to thee?
Nay, fair Lord Christ, lift up thine eyes and see;
Had now thy mother such a lip — like this?
Thou knowest how sweet a thing it is to me.

Inside the Horsel here the air is hot;
Right little peace one hath for it, God wot;
The scented dusty daylight burns the air,
And my heart chokes me till I hear it not.

Behold, my Venus, my soul's body, lies
With my love laid upon her garment-wise,
Feeling my love in all her limbs and hair
And shed between her eyelids through her eyes.

She holds my heart in her sweet open hands
Hanging asleep; hard by her head there stands,
Crowned with gilt thorns and clothed with flesh like fire,
Love, wan as foam blown up the salt burnt sands —

Hot as the brackish waifs of yellow spume
That shift and steam — loose clots of arid fume
From the sea's panting mouth of dry desire;
There stands he, like one laboring at a loom.

The warp holds fast across; and every thread
That makes the woof up has dry specks of red;
Always the shuttle cleaves clean through, and he
Weaves with the hair of many a ruined head.

Love is not glad nor sorry, as I deem;
Laboring he dreams, and labors in the dream,
Till when the spool is finished, lo, I see
His web, reeled off, curls and goes out like steam.

Night falls like fire; the heavy lights run low,
And as they drop, my blood and body so
Shake as the flame shakes, full of days and hours
That sleep not neither weep they as they go.

Ah, yet would God, this flesh of mine might be
Where air might wash and long leaves cover me,
Where tides of grass break into foam of flowers,
Or where the wind's feet shine along the sea.

Ah, yet would God that stems and roots were bred
Out of my weary body and my head,
That sleep were sealed upon me with a seal
And I were as the least of all his dead.

Would God my blood were dew to feed the grass,
Mine ears made deaf and mine eyes blind as glass,
My body broken as a turning wheel,
And my mouth stricken ere it saith Alas!

Ah, God, that love were as a flower or flame,
That life were as the naming of a name,
That death were not more pitiful than desire,
That these things were not one thing and the same!

Behold now, surely somewhere there is death;
For each man hath some space of years, he saith,
A little space of time ere time expire,
A little day, a little way of breath.

And, lo, between the sundawn and the sun,
His day's work and his night's work are undone;
And, lo, between the nightfall and the light,
He is not, and none knoweth of such an one.

Ah, God, that I were as all souls that be,
As any herb or leaf of any tree,
As men that toil through hours of laboring night,
As bones of men under the deep sharp sea.

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25. **Horsel**, Hörselberg, the Mountain of Venus, in central Germany. In medieval tradition Venus was an enchantress who held her court with pagan splendor and revelry in a cavern in this mountain. This tradition is the theme of the legend of Tannhäuser. See Morris's *The Hill of Venus*.
26. **wot**, knows.

Outside it must be winter among men;
For at the gold bars of the gates again
I heard all night and all the hours of it
The wind's wet wings and fingers drip with rain.

Knights gather, riding sharp for cold; I know
The ways and woods are strangled with the snow;
And with short song the maidens spin and sit
Until Christ's birthnight, lily-like, arow.

The scent and shadow shed about me make
The very soul in all my senses ache;
The hot hard night is fed upon my breath,
And sleep beholds me from afar awake.

Alas, but surely where the hills grow deep,
Or where the wild ways of the sea are steep,
Or in strange places somewhere there is death,
And on death's face the scattered hair of sleep.

There lover-like with lips and limbs that meet
They lie, they pluck sweet fruit of life and eat;
But me the hot and hungry days devour,
And in my mouth no fruit of theirs is sweet.

No fruit of theirs, but fruit of my desire,
For her love's sake whose lips through mine respire;
Her eyelids on her eyes like flower on flower,
Mine eyelids on mine eyes like fire on fire.

So lie we, not as sleep that lies by death,
With heavy kisses and with happy breath;
Not as man lies by woman, when the bride
Laughs low for love's sake and the words he saith.

For she lies, laughing low with love; she lies
And turns his kisses on her lips to sighs,
To sighing sound of lips unsatisfied,
And the sweet tears are tender with her eyes.

Ah, not as they, but as the souls that were
Slain in the old time, having found her fair;
Who, sleeping with her lips upon their eyes,
Heard sudden serpents hiss across her hair.

Their blood runs round the roots of time like rain;
She casts them forth and gathers them again;
With nerve and bone she weaves and multiplies
Exceeding pleasure out of extreme pain.

Her little chambers drip with flower-like red,
Her girdles, and the chaplets of her head,
Her armlets and her anklets; with her feet
She tramples all that wine-press of the dead.

Her gateways smoke with fume of flowers and fires,
With loves burnt out and unassuaged desires;
Between her lips the steam of them is sweet,
The languor in her ears of many lyres.

Her beds are full of perfume and sad sound,
Her doors are made with music, and barred round
With sighing and with laughter and with tears,
With tears whereby strong souls of men are bound.

There is the knight Adonis that was slain;
With flesh and blood she chains him for a chain;
The body and the spirit in her ears
Cry, for her lips divide him vein by vein.

Yea, all she slayeth; yea, every man save me;
Me, love, thy lover that must cleave to thee
Till the ending of the days and ways of earth,
The shaking of the sources of the sea.

Me, most forsaken of all souls that fell;
Me, satiated with things insatiable;
Me, for whose sake the extreme hell makes mirth,
Yea, laughter kindles at the heart of hell.

Alas thy beauty! for thy mouth's sweet sake
My soul is bitter to me, my limbs quake
As water, as the flesh of men that weep,
As their heart's vein whose heart goes nigh to break.

Ah, God, that sleep with flower-sweet finger-tips
Would crush the fruit of death upon my lips;
Ah, God, that death would tread the grapes of sleep
And wring their juice upon me as it drips.

There is no change of cheer for many days,
But change of chimes high up in the air, that sways
Rung by the running fingers of the wind;
And singing sorrows heard on hidden ways.

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102. **respire,** breathe.

122. **chaplets,** wreaths. 133. **Adonis,** the beautiful youth loved by Venus, goddess of love. He was slain while hunting. Because of the great sorrow of Venus, the gods of the lower world allowed Adonis to spend half of each year with her in the upper world.

Day smiteth day in twain, night sundereth night,
And on mine eyes the dark sits as the light;
Yea, Lord, thou knowest I know not, having sinned,
If heaven be clean or unclean in thy sight.

Yea, as if earth were sprinkled over me,
Such chafed harsh earth as chokes a sandy sea,
Each pore doth yearn, and the dried blood thereof
Gasps by sick fits; my heart swims heavily;

There is a feverish famine in my veins;
Below her bosom, where a crushed grape stains
The white and blue, there my lips caught and clove
An hour since, and what mark of me remains?

I dare not always touch her, lest the kiss
Leave my lips charred. Yea, Lord, a little bliss,
Brief bitter bliss, one hath for a great sin;
Nathless thou knowest how sweet a thing it is.

Sin, is it sin whereby men's souls are thrust
Into the pit? yet had I a good trust
To save my soul before it slipped therein,
Trod under by the fire-shod feet of lust.

For if mine eyes fail and my soul takes breath,
I look between the iron sides of death
Into sad hell, where all sweet love hath end —
All but the pain that never finisheth.

There are the naked faces of great kings,
The singing folk with all their lute-playings;
There when one cometh he shall have to friend
The grave that covets and the worm that clings.

There sit the knights that were so great of hand,
The ladies that were queens of fair green land,
Grown gray and black now, brought unto the dust,
Soiled, without raiment, clad about with sand.

There is one end for all of them; they sit
Naked and sad, they drink the dregs of it,
Trodden as grapes in the wine-press of lust,
Trampled and trodden by the fiery feet.

I see the marvelous mouth whereby there fell
Cities and people whom the gods loved well,
Yet for her sake on them the fire gat hold,
And for their sakes on her the fire of hell.

And softer than the Egyptian lote-leaf is,
The queen whose face was worth the world to kiss,
Wearing at breast a suckling snake of gold;
And large pale lips of strong Semiramis,

Curled like a tiger's that curl back to feed;
Red only where the last kiss made them bleed;
Her hair most thick with many a carven gem,
Deep in the mane, great-chested, like a steed.

Yea, with red sin the faces of them shine;
But in all these there was no sin like mine;
No, not in all the strange great sins of them
That made the wine-press froth and foam with wine.

For I was of Christ's choosing, I God's knight,
No blinkard heathen stumbling for scant light;
I can well see, for all the dusty days
Gone past, the clean great time of goodly fight.

I smell the breathing battle sharp with blows,
With shriek of shafts and snapping short of bows;
The fair pure sword smites out in subtle ways,
Sounds and long lights are shed between the rows

Of beautiful mailed men; the edged light slips,
Most like a snake that takes short breath and dips
Sharp from the beautifully bending head,
With all its gracious body lithe as lips

That curl in touching you; right in this wise
My sword doth, seeming fire in mine own eyes,
Leaving all colors in them brown and red
And flecked with death; then the keen breaths like sighs,

The caught-up choked dry laughters following them,
When all the fighting face is grown a flame
For pleasure, and the pulse that stuns the ears,
And the heart's gladness of the goodly game.

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172. **Nathless**, nevertheless. 181 ff. **There . . . kings, etc.** See Critical Notes. 186. **queens . . . land**, such as Helen of Troy and Cleopatra, queen of Egypt. See *A Dream of Fair Women*, 85 and 127, page 32. 191-192. **Trodden . . . feet.** See note on *The Battle of Naseby*, 4, page 1.

197. **lote-leaf**, the leaf of the lotos. See *The Lotos-Eaters* page 28, and Critical Note. 198. **The queen**, Cleopatra. Dryden's drama on Antony and Cleopatra was entitled *All for Love; or the World Well Lost.* See *A Dream of Fair Women*, 155 and note, page 33. 200. **Semiramis**, in legendary history the queen of Assyria. She is said to have built the city of Babylon and its famous hanging gardens. 210. **blinkard**, blinking, stupid.

Let me think yet a little; I do know
These things were sweet, but sweet such years ago,
Their savor is all turned now into tears;
Yea, ten years since, where the blue ripples blow,

The blue curled eddies of the blowing Rhine,
I felt the sharp wind shaking grass and vine
Touch my blood, too, and sting me with delight
Through all this waste and weary body of mine

That never feels clear air; right gladly then
I rode alone, a great way off my men,
And heard the chiming bridle smite and smite,
And gave each rime thereof some rime again,

Till my song shifted to that iron one;
Seeing there rode up between me and the sun
Some certain of my foe's men, for his three
White wolves across their painted coats did run.

The first red-bearded, with square cheeks — alack,
I made my knave's blood turn his beard to black;
The slaying of him was a joy to see.
Perchance, too, when at night he came not back,

Some woman fell a-weeping, whom this thief
Would beat when he had drunken; yet small grief
Hath any for the ridding of such knaves;
Yea, if one wept, I doubt her teen was brief.

This bitter love is sorrow in all lands,
Draining of eyelids, wringing of drenched hands,
Sighing of hearts and filling up of graves;
A sign across the head of the world he stands,

As one that hath a plague-mark on his brows;
Dust and spilt blood do track him to his house
Down under earth; sweet smells of lip and cheek,
Like a sweet snake's breath made more poisonous

With chewing of some perfumed deadly grass,
Are shed all round his passage if he pass,
And their quenched savor leaves the whole soul weak,
Sick with keen guessing whence the perfume was.

As one who hidden in deep sedge and reeds
Smells the rare scent made where a panther feeds,
And tracking ever slotwise the warm smell
Is snapped upon by the sweet mouth and bleeds,

His head far down the hot sweet throat of her —
So one tracks love, whose breath is deadlier,
And, lo, one springe and you are fast in hell,
Fast as the gin's grip of a wayfarer.

I think now, as the heavy hours decease
One after one, and bitter thoughts increase
One upon one, of all sweet finished things:
The breaking of the battle; the long peace

Wherein we sat clothed softly, each man's hair
Crowned with green leaves beneath white hoods of vair;
The sounds of sharp spears at great tourneyings,
And noise of singing in the late sweet air.

I sang of love too, knowing naught thereof;
"Sweeter," I said, "the little laugh of love
Than tears out of the eyes of Magdalen,
Or any fallen feather of the Dove.

"The broken little laugh that spoils a kiss,
The ache of purple pulses, and the bliss
Of blinded eyelids that expand again —
Love draws them open with those lips of his,

"Lips that cling hard till the kissed face has grown
Of one same fire and color with their own;
Then ere one sleep, appeased with sacrifice,
Where his lips wounded, there his lips atone."

I sang these things long since and knew them not:
"Lo, here is love, or there is love, God wot,
This man and that finds favor in his eyes,"
I said, "but I, what guerdon have I got?

"The dust of praise that is blown everywhere
In all men's faces with the common air;
The bay-leaf that wants chafing to be sweet
Before they wind it in a singer's hair."

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252. **teen**, grief, sorrow.

267. **slotwise**, in the way one follows a slot—that is, a track or trace of an animal. 271-2. **springe, gin**, snares or traps for catching game. 278. **vair**, the skin of a species of squirrel, much used in the Middle Ages as fur for costly dresses and robes. 283. **Magdalen.** See Rossetti's *Mary Magdalene* and note, page 525. 284. **the Dove.** Cf. *Matthew*, 3:16-17.—"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" 299. **bay-leaf**, laurel, often used in wreaths for crowning poets and heroes in ancient times.

So that one dawn I rode forth sorrowing;
I had no hope but of some evil thing,
And so rode slowly past the windy wheat
And past the vineyard and the water-spring,

Up to the Horsel. A great elder-tree
Held back its heaps of flowers to let me see
The ripe tall grass, and one that walked therein,
Naked, with hair shed over to the knee.

She walked between the blossom and the grass;
I knew the beauty of her, what she was,
The beauty of her body and her sin,
And in my flesh the sin of hers, alas!

Alas! for sorrow is all the end of this.
O sad kissed mouth, how sorrowful it is!
O breast whereat some suckling sorrow clings,
Red with the bitter blossom of a kiss!

Ah, with blind lips I felt for you, and found
About my neck your hands and hair enwound,
The hands that stifle and the hair that stings,
I felt them fasten sharply without sound.

Yea, for my sin I had great store of bliss;
Rise up, make answer for me, let thy kiss
Seal my lips hard from speaking of my sin,
Lest one go mad to hear how sweet it is.

Yet I waxed faint with fume of barren bowers,
And murmuring of the heavy-headed hours;
And let the dove's beak fret and peck within
My lips in vain, and Love shed fruitless flowers.

So that God looked upon me when your hands
Were hot about me; yea, God brake my bands
To save my soul alive, and I came forth
Like a man blind and naked in strange lands

That hears men laugh and weep, and knows not whence
Nor wherefore, but is broken in his sense;
Howbeit I met folk riding from the north
Toward Rome, to purge them of their souls' offense.

And rode with them, and spake to none; the day
Stunned me like lights upon some wizard way,
And ate like fire mine eyes and mine eyesight;
So rode I, hearing all these chant and pray,

And marveled; till before us rose and fell
White curséd hills, like outer skirts of hell
Seen where men's eyes look through the day to night,
Like a jagged shell's lips, harsh, untunable,

Blown in between by devils' wrangling breath;
Nathless we won well past that hell and death,
Down to the sweet land where all airs are good,
Even unto Rome where God's grace tarrieth.

Then came each man and worshiped at his knees
Who in the Lord God's likeness bears the keys
To bind or loose, and called on Christ's shed blood,
And so the sweet-souled father gave him ease.

But when I came I fell down at his feet,
Saying, "Father, though the Lord's blood be right sweet,
The spot it takes not off the panther's skin,
Nor shall an Ethiop's stain be bleached with it.

"Lo, I have sinned and have spat out at God,
Wherefore his hand is heavier and his rod
More sharp because of mine exceeding sin,
And all his raiment redder than bright blood

"Before mine eyes; yea, for my sake I wot
The heat of hell is waxen seven times hot
Through my great sin." Then spake he some sweet word,
Giving me cheer; which thing availed me not;

Yea, scarce I wist if such indeed were said;
For when I ceased — lo, as one newly dead
Who hears a great cry out of hell, I heard
The crying of his voice across my head.

"Until this dry shred staff, that hath no whit
Of leaf nor bark, bear blossom and smell sweet,
Seek thou not any mercy in God's sight,
For so long shalt thou be cast out from it."

Yea, what if dried-up stems wax red and green,
Shall that thing be which is not nor has been?
Yea, what if sapless bark wax green and white,
Shall any good fruit grow upon my sin?

Nay, though sweet fruit were plucked of a dry tree,

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352. **sweet-souled father**, Pope Urban IV (1261-64), according to the legend. 355-356. **spot . . . with it.** From *Jeremiah*, 13:23.—"Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"

And though men drew sweet waters of the sea,
There should not grow sweet leaves on this dead stem,
This waste wan body and shaken soul of me.

Yea, though God search it warily enough,
There is not one sound thing in all thereof;
Though he search all my veins through, searching them
He shall find nothing whole therein but love.

For I came home right heavy, with small cheer,
And, lo, my love, mine own soul's heart, more dear
Than mine own soul, more beautiful than God,
Who hath my being between the hands of her —

Fair still, but fair for no man saving me,
As when she came out of the naked sea
Making the foam as fire whereon she trod,
And as the inner flower of fire was she.

Yea, she laid hold upon me, and her mouth
Clove unto mine as soul to body doth,
And, laughing, made her lips luxurious;
Her hair had smells of all the sunburnt south,

Strange spice and flower, strange savor of crushed fruit,
And perfume the swart kings tread underfoot
For pleasure when their minds wax amorous,
Charred frankincense and grated sandal-root.

And I forgot fear and all weary things,
All ended prayers and perished thanksgivings,
Feeling her face with all her eager hair
Cleave to me, clinging as a fire that clings

To the body and to the raiment, burning them;
As after death I know that such-like flame
Shall cleave to me forever; yea, what care,
Albeit I burn then, having felt the same?

Ah, love, there is no better life than this;
To have known love, how bitter a thing it is,
And afterward be cast out of God's sight;
Yea, these that know not, shall they have such bliss

High up in barren heaven before his face
As we twain in the heavy-hearted place,
Remembering love and all the dead delight,
And all that time was sweet with for a space?

For till the thunder in the trumpet be,
Soul may divide from body, but not we
One from another; I hold thee with my hand,
I let mine eyes have all their will of thee,

I seal myself upon thee with my might,
Abiding alway out of all men's sight
Until God loosen over sea and land
The thunder of the trumpets of the night.

(1866)

## THE TRIUMPH OF TIME

Before our lives divide forever,
While time is with us and hands are free
(Time, swift to fasten and swift to sever
Hand from hand, as we stand by the sea),
I will say no word that a man might say
Whose whole life's love goes down in a day;
For this could never have been, and never —
Though the gods and the years relent — shall be.

Is it worth a tear, is it worth an hour,
To think of things that are well outworn?
Of fruitless husk and fugitive flower,
The dream foregone and the deed forborne?
Though joy be done with and grief be vain,
Time shall not sever us wholly in twain;
Earth is not spoilt for a single shower;
But the rain has ruined the ungrown corn.

It will grow not again, this fruit of my heart,
Smitten with sunbeams, ruined with rain.
The singing seasons divide and depart,
Winter and summer depart in twain.
It will grow not again, it is ruined at root,
The bloodlike blossom, the dull red fruit;
Though the heart yet sickens, the lips yet smart,
With sullen savor of poisonous pain.

I have given no man of my fruit to eat;
I trod the grapes, I have drunken the wine.
Had you eaten and drunken and found it sweet,
This wild new growth of the corn and vine,
This wine and bread without lees or leaven,
We had grown as gods, as the gods in heaven,

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390. **when she . . . sea.** According to tradition Aphrodite (Venus) sprang from the foam of the sea.

417. **thunder in the trumpet,** the sound of the trumpet on the Day of Judgment.

*The Triumph of Time.* This poem was written soon after Swinburne's rejection by a young girl whom he ardently loved.

16. **corn,** grain, wheat.

Souls fair to look upon, goodly to greet,
One splendid spirit, your soul and mine.

In the change of years, in the coil of things,
In the clamor and rumor of life to be,
We, drinking love at the furthest springs,
Covered with love as a covering tree,
We had grown as gods, as the gods above,
Filled from the heart to the lips with love,
Held fast in his hands, clothed warm with his wings,
O love, my love, had you loved but me!

We had stood as the sure stars stand, and moved
As the moon moves, loving the world; and seen
Grief collapse as a thing disproved,
Death consume as a thing unclean;
Twain halves of a perfect heart, made fast
Soul to soul while the years fell past —
Had you loved me once, as you have not loved;
Had the chance been with us that has not been.

I have put my days and dreams out of mind,
Days that are over, dreams that are done.
Though we seek life through, we shall surely find
There is none of them clear to us now, not one.
But clear are these things; the grass and the sand,
Where, sure as the eyes reach, ever at hand,
With lips wide open and face burnt blind,
The strong sea-daisies feast on the sun.

The low downs lean to the sea; the stream,
One loose thin pulseless tremulous vein,
Rapid and vivid and dumb as a dream,
Works downward, sick of the sun and the rain;
No wind is rough with the rank rare flowers;
The sweet sea, mother of loves and hours,
Shudders and shines as the gray winds gleam,
Turning her smile to a fugitive pain.

Mother of loves that are swift to fade,
Mother of mutable winds and hours;
A barren mother, a mother-maid,
Cold and clean as her faint salt flowers —
I would we twain were even as she,
Lost in the night and the light of the sea,
Where faint sounds falter and wan beams wade,
Break, and are broken, and shed into showers.

The loves and hours of the life of a man,
They are swift and sad, being born of the sea:
Hours that rejoice and regret for a span,
Born with a man's breath, mortal as he;
Loves that are lost ere they come to birth,
Weeds of the wave, without fruit upon earth.
I lose what I long for, save what I can,
My love, my love, and no love for me!

It is not much that a man can save
On the sands of life, in the straits of time,
Who swims in sight of the great third wave
That never a swimmer shall cross or climb.
Some waif washed up with the strays and spars
That ebb-tide shows to the shore and the stars;
Weed from the water, grass from a grave,
A broken blossom, a ruined rime.

There will no man do for your sake, I think,
What I would have done for the least word said.
I had wrung life dry for your lips to drink,
Broken it up for your daily bread;
Body for body and blood for blood,
As the flow of the full sea risen to flood
That yearns and trembles before it sink,
I had given, and lain down for you, glad and dead.

Yea, hope at highest and all her fruit,
And time at fullest and all his dower,
I had given you surely, and life to boot,
Were we once made one for a single hour.
But now, you are twain, you are cloven apart,
Flesh of his flesh, but heart of my heart;
And deep in one is the bitter root,
And sweet for one is the lifelong flower.

To have died if you cared I should die for you, clung
To my life if you bade me, played my part
As it pleased you — these were the thoughts that stung,
The dreams that smote with a keener dart
Than shafts of love or arrows of death;
These were but as fire is, dust, or breath,
Or poisonous foam on the tender tongue
Of the little snakes that eat my heart.

I wish we were dead together today,
Lost sight of, hidden away out of sight,
Clasped and clothed in the cloven clay,
Out of the world's way, out of the light,
Out of the ages of worldly weather,

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65. **Mother of loves**, the sea.

83. **the great third wave**, a reference to the belief that each third wave is bigger than the two preceding.

Forgotten of all men altogether,
As the world's first dead, taken wholly away,
Made one with death, filled full of the night.

How we should slumber, how we should sleep,
Far in the dark with the dreams and the dews!
And dreaming, grow to each other, and weep,
Laugh low, live softly, murmur and muse;
Yea, and it may be, struck through by the dream,
Feel the dust quicken and quiver, and seem
Alive as of old to the lips, and leap
Spirit to spirit as lovers use.

Sick dreams and sad of a dull delight;
For what shall it profit when men are dead
To have dreamed, to have loved with the whole soul's might,
To have looked for day when the day was fled?
Let come what will, there is one thing worth:
To have had fair love in the life upon earth;
To have held love safe till the day grew night,
While skies had color and lips were red.

Would I lose you now? would I take you then,
If I lose you now that my heart has need?
And come what may after death to men,
What thing worth this will the dead years breed?
Lose life, lose all; but at least I know,
O sweet life's love, having loved you so,
Had I reached you on earth, I should lose not again,
In death nor life, nor in dream or deed.

Yea, I know this well: were you once sealed mine,
Mine in the blood's beat, mine in the breath,
Mixed into me as honey in wine,
Not time, that sayeth and gainsayeth,
Nor all strong things had severed us then;
Not wrath of gods, nor wisdom of men,
Nor all things earthly, nor all divine,
Nor joy nor sorrow, nor life nor death.

I had grown pure as the dawn and the dew;
You had grown strong as the sun or the sea.
But none shall triumph a whole life through;
For death is one, and the fates are three.
At the door of life, by the gate of breath,
There are worse things waiting for men than death;
Death could not sever my soul and you,
As these have severed your soul from me.

You have chosen and clung to the chance they sent you,
Life sweet as perfume and pure as prayer.
But will it not one day in heaven repent you?
Will they solace you wholly, the days that were?
Will you lift up your eyes between sadness and bliss,
Meet mine, and see where the great love is,
And tremble and turn and be changed? Content you;
The gate is strait; I shall not be there.

But you, had you chosen, had you stretched hand,
Had you seen good such a thing were done,
I too might have stood with the souls that stand
In the sun's sight, clothed with the light of the sun;
But who now on earth need care how I live?
Have the high gods anything left to give,
Save dust and laurels and gold and sand?
Which gifts are goodly; but I will none.

O all fair lovers about the world,
There is none of you, none, that shall comfort me.
My thoughts are as dead things, wrecked and whirled
Round and round in a gulf of the sea;
And still, through the sound and the straining stream,
Through the coil and chafe, they gleam in a dream,
The bright fine lips so cruelly curled,
And strange swift eyes where the soul sits free.

Free, without pity, withheld from woe,
Ignorant; fair as the eyes are fair.
Would I have you change now, change at a blow,
Startled and stricken, awake and aware?
Yea, if I could, would I have you see
My very love of you filling me,
And know my soul to the quick, as I know
The likeness and look of your throat and hair?

I shall not change you. Nay, though I might,
Would I change my sweet one love with a word?
I had rather your hair should change in a night,
Clear now as the plume of a black bright bird;
Your face fail suddenly, cease, turn gray,
Die as a leaf that dies in a day.
I will keep my soul in a place out of sight,
Far off, where the pulse of it is not heard.

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156. **fates are three**, Clotho, who spins the thread of life; Lachesis, who determines its length, and Atropos, who cuts it off.

Far off it walks, in a bleak blown space,
Full of the sound of the sorrow of years.
I have woven a veil for the weeping face,
Whose lips have drunken the wine of tears;
I have found a way for the failing feet,
A place for slumber and sorrow to meet;
There is no rumor about the place,
Nor light, nor any that sees or hears.

I have hidden my soul out of sight and said,
"Let none take pity upon thee, none
Comfort thy crying, for, lo, thou art dead;
Lie still now, safe out of sight of the sun.
Have I not built thee a grave, and wrought
Thy grave-clothes on thee of grievous thought,
With soft spun verses and tears unshed,
And sweet light visions of things undone?

"I have given thee garments and balm and myrrh,
And gold, and beautiful burial things.
But thou, be at peace now, make no stir;
Is not thy grave as a royal king's?
Fret not thyself though the end were sore;
Sleep, be patient, vex me no more.
Sleep; what hast thou to do with her?
The eyes that weep, with the mouth that sings?"

Where the dead red leaves of the years lie rotten,
The cold old crimes and the deeds thrown by,
The misconceived and the misbegotten,
I would find a sin to do ere I die,
Sure to dissolve and destroy me all through,
That would set you higher in heaven, serve you
And leave you happy, when clean forgotten,
As a dead man out of mind, am I.

Your lithe hands draw me, your face burns through me,
I am swift to follow you, keen to see;
But love lacks might to redeem or undo me;
As I have been, I know I shall surely be;
"What should such fellows as I do?" Nay,
My part were worse if I chose to play;
For the worst is this, after all — if they knew me,
Not a soul upon earth would pity me.

And I play not for pity of these; but you,
If you saw with your soul what man am I,
You would praise me at least that my soul all through
Clove to you, loathing the lives that lie;
The souls and lips that are bought and sold,
The smiles of silver and kisses of gold,
The lapdog loves that whine as they chew,
The little lovers that curse and cry.

There are fairer women, I hear; that may be;
But I, that I love you and find you fair,
Who are more than fair in my eyes if they be,
Do the high gods know or the great gods care?
Though the swords in my heart for one were seven,
Should the iron hollow of doubtful heaven,
That knows not itself whether night-time or day be,
Reverberate words and a foolish prayer?

I will go back to the great sweet mother,
Mother and lover of men, the sea.
I will go down to her, I and none other,
Close with her, kiss her, and mix her with me;
Cling to her, strive with her, hold her fast.
O fair white mother, in days long past
Born without sister, born without brother,
Set free my soul as thy soul is free.

O fair green-girdled mother of mine,
Sea, that art clothed with the sun and the rain,
Thy sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,
Thy large embraces are keen like pain.
Save me and hide me with all thy waves,
Find me one grave of thy thousand graves,
Those pure cold populous graves of thine
Wrought without hand in a world without stain.

I shall sleep, and move with the moving ships,
Change as the winds change, veer in the tide;
My lips will feast on the foam of thy lips,
I shall rise with thy rising, with thee subside;
Sleep, and not know if she be, if she were,
Filled full with life to the eyes and hair,
As a rose is fulfilled to the roseleaf tips
With splendid summer and perfume and pride.

This woven raiment of nights and days,
Were it once cast off and unwound from me,
Naked and glad would I walk in thy ways,
Alive and aware of thy ways and thee;
Clear of the whole world, hidden at home,
Clothed with the green and crowned with the foam,
A pulse of the life of thy straits and bays,
A vein in the heart of the streams of the sea.

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217. **myrrh**, a kind of rich perfume.

253. **swords . . . seven**, a reference to the Seven Sorrows of Mary (see note on Browning's *Up at a Villa—Down in the City*, 52, page 222).

Fair mother, fed with the lives of men,
Thou art subtle and cruel of heart, men say.
Thou hast taken, and shalt not render again;
Thou art full of thy dead, and cold as they.
But death is the worst that comes of thee;
Thou art fed with our dead, O mother, O sea,
But when hast thou fed on our hearts? or when,
Having given us love, hast thou taken away?

O tender-hearted, O perfect lover,
Thy lips are bitter, and sweet thine heart.
The hopes that hurt and the dreams that hover,
Shall they not vanish away and apart?
But thou, thou art sure, thou art older than earth;
Thou art strong for death and fruitful of birth;
Thy depths conceal and thy gulfs discover;
From the first thou wert; in the end thou art.

And grief shall endure not forever, I know.
As things that are not shall these things be;
We shall live through seasons of sun and of snow,
And none be grievous as this to me.
We shall hear, as one in a trance that hears,
The sound of time, the rime of the years;
Wrecked hope and passionate pain will grow
As tender things of a springtide sea,

Sea-fruit that swings in the waves that hiss,
Drowned gold and purple and royal rings.
And all time past, was it all for this?
Times unforgotten, and treasures of things?
Swift years of liking, and sweet long laughter,
That wist not well of the years thereafter
Till love woke, smitten at heart by a kiss,
With lips that trembled and trailing wings?

There lived a singer in France of old
By the tideless dolorous midland sea.
In a land of sand and ruin and gold
There shone one woman, and none but she.
And finding life for her love's sake fail,
Being fain to see her, he bade set sail,
Touched land, and saw her as life grew cold,
And praised God, seeing; and so died he —

Died, praising God for his gift and grace;
For she bowed down to him weeping, and said
"Live"; and her tears were shed on his face
Or ever the life in his face was shed.
The sharp tears fell through her hair, and stung
Once, and her close lips touched him and clung
Once, and grew one with his lips for a space;
And so drew back, and the man was dead.

O brother, the gods were good to you.
Sleep, and be glad while the world endures.
Be well content as the years wear through;
Give thanks for life, and the loves and lures;
Give thanks for life, O brother, and death,
For the sweet last sound of her feet, her breath,
For gifts she gave you, gracious and few,
Tears and kisses, that lady of yours.

Rest and be glad of the gods; but I,
How shall I praise them, or how take rest?
There is not room under all the sky
For me that know not of worst or best,
Dream or desire of the days before,
Sweet things or bitterness, any more.
Love will not come to me now though I die,
As love came close to you, breast to breast.

I shall never be friends again with roses;
I shall loathe sweet tunes, where a note grown strong
Relents and recoils, and climbs and closes,
As a wave of the sea turned back by song.
There are sounds where the soul's delight takes fire,
Face to face with its own desire;
A delight that rebels, a desire that reposes;
I shall hate sweet music my whole life long.

The pulse of war and passion of wonder,
The heavens that murmur, the sounds that shine,
The stars that sing and the loves that thunder,
The music burning at heart like wine,
An armed archangel whose hands raise up
All senses mixed in the spirit's cup
Till flesh and spirit are molten in sunder —
These things are over, and no more mine.

These were a part of the playing I heard
Once, ere my love and my heart were at strife;
Love that sings and hath wings as a bird,
Balm of the wound and heft of the knife.
Fairer than earth is the sea, and sleep
Than overwatching of eyes that weep,
Now time has done with his one sweet word,
The wine and leaven of lovely life.

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321. **singer . . . old,** a reference to the story of the love of Geoffrey Rudel, a Provençal poet of the 12th century, for the Countess of Tripoli (see Browning's *Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli*, page 191, and Critical Note).

363. **stars that sing,** a reference to the ancient belief that the stars made music as they revolved in their spheres.

I shall go my ways, tread out my measure,
Fill the days of my daily breath
With fugitive things not good to treasure,
Do as the world doth, say as it saith;
But if we had loved each other — O sweet,
Had you felt, lying under the palms of your feet,
The heart of my heart, beating harder with pleasure
To feel you tread it to dust and death —

Ah, had I not taken my life up and given
All that life gives and the years let go,
The wine and honey, the balm and leaven,
The dreams reared high and the hopes brought low?
Come life, come death, not a word be said;
Should I lose you living, and vex you dead?
I never shall tell you on earth; and in heaven,
If I cry to you then, will you hear or know?
(1866)

## A LEAVE-TAKING

Let us go hence, my songs; she will not hear.
Let us go hence together without fear;
Keep silence now, for singing-time is over,
And over all old things and all things dear.
She loves not you nor me as all we love her.
Yea, though we sang as angels in her ear,
She would not hear.

Let us rise up and part; she will not know.
Let us go seaward as the great winds go,
Full of blown sand and foam; what help is here?
There is no help, for all these things are so,
And all the world is bitter as a tear.
And how these things are, though ye strove to show,
She would not know.

Let us go home and hence; she will not weep.
We gave love many dreams and days to keep,
Flowers without scent, and fruits that would not grow,
Saying, "If thou wilt, thrust in thy sickle and reap."
All is reaped now; no grass is left to mow;
And we that sowed, though all we fell on sleep,
She would not weep.

Let us go hence and rest; she will not love.
She shall not hear us if we sing hereof,
Nor see love's ways, how sore they are and steep.
Come hence, let be, lie still; it is enough.
Love is a barren sea, bitter and deep;
And though she saw all heaven in flower above,
She would not love.

Let us give up, go down; she will not care.
Though all the stars made gold of all the air,
And the sea moving saw before it move
One moon-flower making all the foam-flowers fair;
Though all those waves went over us, and drove
Deep down the stifling lips and drowning hair,
She would not care.

Let us go hence, go hence; she will not see.
Sing all once more together; surely she,
She too, remembering days and words that were,
Will turn a little toward us, sighing; but we,
We are hence, we are gone, as though we had not been there.
Nay, and though all men seeing had pity on me,
She would not see.
(1866)

## ITYLUS

Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow,
How can thine heart be full of the spring?
A thousand summers are over and dead.
What hast thou found in the spring to follow?
What hast thou found in thine heart to sing?
What wilt thou do when the summer is shed?

O swallow, sister, O fair swift swallow,
Why wilt thou fly after spring to the south,
The soft south whither thine heart is set?
Shall not the grief of the old time follow?
Shall not the song thereof cleave to thy mouth?
Hast thou forgotten ere I forget?

Sister, my sister, O fleet sweet swallow,
Thy way is long to the sun and the south;
But I, fulfilled of my heart's desire,
Shedding my song upon height, upon hollow,
From tawny body and sweet small mouth
Feed the heart of the night with fire.

I the nightingale all spring through,
O swallow, sister, O changing swallow,
All spring through till the spring be done,
Clothed with the light of the night on the dew,
Sing, while the hours and the wild birds follow,
Take flight and follow and find the sun.

Sister, my sister, O soft light swallow,
Though all things feast in the spring's guest-chamber,

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*Itylus.* See Arnold's *Philomela* and note, page 470.

How hast thou heart to be glad thereof yet?
For where thou fliest I shall not follow,
Till life forget and death remember,
Till thou remember and I forget.

Swallow, my sister, O singing swallow,
I know not how thou hast heart to sing.
Hast thou the heart? is it all past over?
Thy lord the summer is good to follow,
And fair the feet of thy lover the spring;
But what wilt thou say to the spring, thy lover?

O swallow, sister, O fleeting swallow,
My heart in me is a molten ember,
And over my head the waves have met.
But thou wouldst tarry or I would follow,
Could I forget or thou remember,
Couldst thou remember and I forget.

O sweet stray sister, O shifting swallow,
The heart's division divideth us.
Thy heart is light as a leaf of a tree;
But mine goes forth among sea-gulfs hollow
To the place of the slaying of Itylus,
The feast of Daulis, the Thracian sea.

O swallow, sister, O rapid swallow,
I pray thee sing not a little space.
Are not the roofs and the lintels wet?
The woven web that was plain to follow,
The small slain body, the flowerlike face,
Can I remember if thou forget?

O sister, sister, thy first-begotten!
The hands that cling and the feet that follow,
The voice of the child's blood crying yet
*Who hath remembered me? who hath forgotten?*
Thou hast forgotten, O summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.
(1866)

## HYMN TO PROSERPINE

(AFTER THE PROCLAMATION IN ROME OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH)

*Vicisti, Galilæe*

I have lived long enough, having seen one thing, that love hath an end;
Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and befriend.
Thou art more than the day or the morrow, the seasons that laugh or that weep;
For these give joy and sorrow; but thou, Proserpina, sleep.
Sweet is the treading of wine, and sweet the feet of the dove;
But a goodlier gift is thine than foam of the grapes or love.
Yea, is not even Apollo, with hair and harp-string of gold,
A bitter god to follow, a beautiful god to behold?
I am sick of singing; the bays burn deep and chafe. I am fain
To rest a little from praise and grievous pleasure and pain.
For the gods we know not of, who give us our daily breath,
We know they are cruel as love or life, and lovely as death.

O gods dethroned and deceased, cast forth, wiped out in a day!
From your wrath is the world released, redeemed from your chains, men say.
New gods are crowned in the city; their flowers have broken your rods;
They are merciful, clothed with pity, the young compassionate gods.
But for me their new device is barren, the days are bare;
Things long past over suffice, and men forgotten that were.
Time and the gods are at strife; ye dwell in the midst thereof,
Draining a little life from the barren breasts of love.
I say to you, cease, take rest; yea, I say to you all, be at peace,
Till the bitter milk of her breast and the barren bosom shall cease.

Wilt thou yet take all, Galilean? But these thou shalt not take—
The laurel, the palms, and the pæan, the breasts of the nymphs in the brake,
Breasts more soft than a dove's, that tremble with tenderer breath;

---

48. **feast of Daulis**, the feast in the city of Daulis, in Phocis, Greece, at which Tereus, king of Thrace, ate the flesh of his son Itylus.

*Hymn to Proserpine.* Proserpine was the goddess and queen of the lower world. As a maiden (line 2) she was carried off from Sicily by Pluto, god of the lower world, and became his wife. The Proclamation of Christian faith may be identified with the Edict of Milan promulgated by the Roman emperors Constantine and Licinius in 313. It recognized Christianity and restored to Christians their civil and religious rights.

**Vicisti, Galilæe**, Thou hast conquered, Galilean (line 35). These words were attributed by early Christian writers to the Roman emperor, Julian (331-63), who had renounced Christianity but who is said to have died with this confession on his lips.

The poem, represented as spoken by a noble pagan who regrets the overthrow of the Greek deities, presents an essential part of Swinburne's philosophy of life. Swinburne characterized this poem and the *Hymn of Man* (page 699) as "the deathsong of spiritual decadence and the birthsong of spiritual renascence."

5. **Sweet . . . dove.** The dove was sacred to Venus. 7. **Apollo**, the god of the sun, of poetry, and of youth and manly beauty. His attributes were the bow and the lyre. 9. **bays**, the poet's crown of laurel. 24. **laurel, palms.** These were sacred to the gods.

And all the wings of the Loves, and all the joy before death;
All the feet of the hours that sound as a single lyre,
Dropped and deep in the flowers, with strings that flicker like fire.
More than these wilt thou give, things fairer than all these things?
Nay, for a little we live, and life hath mutable wings.
A little while and we die; shall life not thrive as it may?
For no man under the sky lives twice, outliving his day.
And grief is a grievous thing, and a man hath enough of his tears;
Why should he labor, and bring fresh grief to blacken his years?

Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown gray from thy breath;
We have drunken of things Lethean, and fed on the fullness of death.
Laurel is green for a season, and love is sweet for a day;
But love grows bitter with treason, and laurel outlives not May.
Sleep, shall we sleep after all? for the world is not sweet in the end;
For the old faiths loosen and fall, the new years ruin and rend.
Fate is a sea without shore, and the soul is a rock that abides;
But her ears are vexed with the roar and her face with the foam of the tides.
O lips that the live blood faints in, the leavings of racks and rods!
O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted gods!
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all knees bend,
I kneel not, neither adore you, but standing, look to the end.

All delicate days and pleasant, all spirits and sorrows are cast
Far out with the foam of the present that sweeps to the surf of the past;
Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and between the remote sea-gates,
Waste water washes, and tall ships founder, and deep death waits;
Where, mighty with deepening sides, clad about with the seas as with wings,
And impelled of invisible tides, and fulfilled of unspeakable things,
White-eyed and poisonous-finned, shark-toothed and serpentine-curled,
Rolls, under the whitening wind of the future, the wave of the world.
The depths stand naked in sunder behind it, the storms flee away;
In the hollow before it the thunder is taken and snared as a prey;
In its sides is the north-wind bound; and its salt is of all men's tears,
With light of ruin, and sound of changes, and pulse of years;
With travail of day after day, and with trouble of hour upon hour.
And bitter as blood is the spray; and the crests are as fangs that devour;
And its vapor and storm of its steam as the sighing of spirits to be;
And its noise as the noise in a dream; and its depths as the roots of the sea;
And the height of its heads as the height of the utmost stars of the air;
And the ends of the earth at the might thereof tremble, and time is made bare.
Will ye bridle the deep sea with reins, will ye chasten the high sea with rods?
Will ye take her to chain her with chains, who is older than all ye gods?
All ye as a wind shall go by, as a fire shall ye pass and be past;
Ye are gods, and behold, ye shall die, and the waves be upon you at last.
In the darkness of time, in the deeps of the years, in the changes of things,
Ye shall sleep as a slain man sleeps, and the world shall forget you for kings.
Though the feet of thine high priests tread where thy lords and our forefathers trod,
Though these that were gods are dead, and thou being dead art a god,
Though before thee the throned Cytherean be fallen, and hidden her head,
Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean, thy dead shall go down to thee dead.

Of the maiden thy mother men sing as a goddess with grace clad around;
Thou art throned where another was king; where another was queen she is crowned.
Yea, once we had sight of another; but now she is queen, say these.
Not as thine, not as thine was our mother, a blossom of flowering seas,
Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment, and fair as the foam,
And fleeter than kindled fire, and a goddess, and mother of Rome.

---

36. **Lethean,** causing forgetfulness. Lethe was the river of forgetfulness in Hades. 43. **racks and rods,** a reference to the early persecution of the Christians and to their self-inflicted torture as a means of penance. 44. **ghastly . . . gods,** a reference to the worship of saints' relics and the crucified Christ.

73. **Cytherean,** Aphrodite, who, according to tradition, rose from the foam of the sea and landed at Cythera, an island southeast of Greece. See lines 85-87. 80. **mother of Rome,** Aphrodite.

For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to sorrow; but ours,
Her deep hair heavily laden with odor and color of flowers,
White rose of the rose-white water, a silver splendor, a flame,
Bent down unto us that besought her, and earth grew sweet with her name.
For thine came weeping, a slave among slaves, and rejected; but she
Came flushed from the full-flushed wave, and imperial, her foot on the sea.
And the wonderful waters knew her, the winds and the viewless ways,
And the roses grew rosier, and bluer the sea-blue stream of the bays.

Ye are fallen, our lords, by what token? we wist that ye should not fall.
Ye were all so fair that are broken; and one more fair than ye all.
But I turn to her still, having seen she shall surely abide in the end;
Goddess and maiden and queen, be near me now and befriend.
O daughter of earth, of my mother, her crown and blossom of birth,
I am also, I also, thy brother; I go as I came unto earth.
In the night where thine eyes are as moons are in heaven, the night where thou art,
Where the silence is more than all tunes, where sleep overflows from the heart,
Where the poppies are sweet as the rose in our world, and the red rose is white,
And the wind falls faint as it blows with the fume of the flowers of the night,
And the murmur of spirits that sleep in the shadow of gods from afar
Grows dim in thine ears and deep as the deep dim soul of a star,
In the sweet low light of thy face, under heavens untrod by the sun,
Let my soul with their souls find place, and forget what is done and undone.
Thou art more than the gods who number the days of our temporal breath;
For these give labor and slumber; but thou, Proserpina, death.
Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a season in silence I know
I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as they sleep; even so.
For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze for a span.
A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man.
So long I endure, no longer; and laugh not again, neither weep.
For there is no god found stronger than death; and death is a sleep.

(1866)

## ILICET

There is an end of joy and sorrow;
Peace all day long, all night, all morrow,
But never a time to laugh or weep.
The end is come of pleasant places,
The end of tender words and faces,
The end of all, the poppied sleep.

No place for sound within their hearing,
No room to hope, no time for fearing,
No lips to laugh, no lids for tears.
The old years have run out all their measure;
No chance of pain, no chance of pleasure,
No fragment of the broken years.

Outside of all the worlds and ages,
There where the fool is as the sage is,
There where the slayer is clean of blood,
No end, no passage, no beginning,
There where the sinner leaves off sinning,
There where the good man is not good.

There is not one thing with another,
But Evil saith to Good: My brother,
My brother, I am one with thee.
They shall not strive nor cry forever;
No man shall chose between them; never
Shall this thing end and that thing be.

Wind wherein seas and stars are shaken
Shall shake them, and they shall not waken;
None that has lain down shall arise;
The stones are sealed across their places;
One shadow is shed on all their faces,
One blindness cast on all their eyes.

Sleep, is it sleep perchance that covers
Each face, as each face were his lover's?
Farewell; as men that sleep fare well.
The grave's mouth laughs unto derision
Desire and dread and dream and vision,
Delight of heaven and sorrow of hell.

No soul shall tell nor lip shall number
The names and tribes of you that slumber;
No memory, no memorial.
"Thou knowest"—who shall say thou knowest?
There is none highest and none lowest;
An end, an end, an end of all.

Good night, good sleep, good rest from sorrow
To these that shall not have good morrow;

---

91. **her,** Proserpine. 97. **poppies,** flowers of oblivion, sacred to Proserpine. 108. **A little soul, etc.** Swinburne refers in a note to a line from Epictetus, a Greek Stoic philosopher of the 1st century A. D.—"Thou art a little soul bearing up a corpse."

*Ilicet.* The title means *It Is Not Permitted*—that is, one is not permitted to know what follows death.

6. **the poppied sleep.** The poppy was the flower of oblivion; it was sacred to Proserpine, queen of Hades.

The gods be gentle to all these.
May, if death be not, how shall they be?
Nay, is there help in heaven? it may be
All things and lords of things shall cease.

The stooped urn, filling, dips and flashes;
The bronzéd brims are deep in ashes;
The pale old lips of death are fed.
Shall this dust gather flesh hereafter?
Shall one shed tears or fall to laughter,
At sight of all these poor old dead?

Nay, as thou wilt; these know not of it;
Thine eyes' strong weeping shall not profit,
Thy laughter shall not give thee ease;
Cry aloud, spare not, cease not crying,
Sigh, till thou cleave thy sides with sighing,
Thou shalt not raise up one of these.

Burnt spices flash, and burnt wine hisses,
The breathing flame's mouth curls and kisses
The small dried rows of frankincense;
All round the sad red blossoms smolder,
Flowers colored like the fire, but colder,
In sign of sweet things taken hence;

Yea, for their sake and in death's favor
Things of sweet shape and of sweet savor
We yield them, spice and flower and wine;
Yea, costlier things than wine or spices,
Whereof none knoweth how great the price is,
And fruit that comes not of the vine.

From boy's pierced throat and girl's pierced bosom
Drips, reddening round the blood-red blossom,
The slow delicious bright soft blood,
Bathing the spices and the pyre,
Bathing the flowers and fallen fire,
Bathing the blossom by the bud.

Roses whose lips the flame has deadened
Drink till the lapping leaves are reddened
And warm wet inner petals weep;
The flower whereof sick sleep gets leisure,
Barren of balm and purple pleasure,
Fumes with no native steam of sleep.

Why will ye weep? what do ye weeping?
For waking folk and people sleeping,
And sands that fill and sands that fall,
The days rose-red, the poppied hours,
Blood, wine, and spice and fire and flowers,
There is one end of one and all.

Shall such an one lend love or borrow?
Shall these be sorry for thy sorrow?
Shall these give thanks for words or breath?
Their hate is as their loving-kindness;
The frontlet of their brows is blindness,
The armlet of their arms is death.

Lo, for no noise or light of thunder
Shall these grave-clothes be rent in sunder;
He that hath taken, shall he give?
He hath rent them; shall he bind together?
He hath bound them; shall he break the tether?
He hath slain them; shall he bid them live?

A little sorrow, a little pleasure,
Fate metes us from the dusty measure
That holds the date of all of us;
We are born with travail and strong crying,
And from the birth-day to the dying
The likeness of our life is thus.

One girds himself to serve another,
Whose father was the dust, whose mother
The little dead red worm therein;
They find no fruit of things they cherish;
The goodness of a man shall perish,
It shall be one thing with his sin.

In deep wet ways by gray old gardens
Fed with sharp spring the sweet fruit hardens;
They know not what fruits wane or grow;
Red summer burns to the utmost ember;
They know not, neither can remember,
The old years and flowers they used to know.

Ah, for their sakes, so trapped and taken,
For theirs, forgotten and forsaken,
Watch, sleep not, gird thyself with prayer.
Nay, where the heart of wrath is broken,
Where long love ends as a thing spoken,
How shall thy crying enter there?

Though the iron sides of the old world falter,
The likeness of them shall not alter
For all the rumor of periods,
The stars and seasons that come after,
The tears of latter men, the laughter
Of the old unalterable gods.

Far up above the years and nations,
The high gods, clothed and crowned with patience,
Endure through days of deathlike date;
They bear the witness of things hidden;
Before their eyes all life stands chidden,
As they before the eyes of Fate.

Not for their love shall Fate retire,
Nor they relent for our desire,
Nor the graves open for their call.
The end is more than joy and anguish,

---

79. **Roses.** The rose was sacred to Venus.

Than lives that laugh and lives that languish,
The poppied sleep, the end of all.

(1866)

## A MATCH

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or gray grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord in May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

(1866)

## A BALLAD OF BURDENS

The burden of fair women. Vain delight,
And love self-slain in some sweet shameful way,
And sorrowful old age that comes by night
As a thief comes that has no heart by day,
And change that finds fair cheeks and leaves them gray,
And weariness that keeps awake for hire,
And grief that says what pleasure used to say;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bought kisses. This is sore,
A burden without fruit in childbearing;
Between the nightfall and the dawn threescore,
Threescore between the dawn and evening.
The shuddering in thy lips, the shuddering
In thy sad eyelids tremulous like fire,
Makes love seem shameful and a wretched thing.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sweet speeches. Nay, kneel down,
Cover thy head, and weep; for verily
These marked-men that buy thy white and brown
In the last days shall take no thought for thee.
In the last days like earth thy face shall be,
Yea, like sea-marsh made thick with brine and mire,
Sad with sick leavings of the sterile sea.
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of long living. Thou shalt fear
Waking, and sleeping mourn upon thy bed;
And say at night, "Would God the day were here,"
And say at dawn, "Would God the day were dead."
With weary days thou shalt be clothed and fed,
And wear remorse of heart for thine attire,
Pain for thy girdle and sorrow upon thine head;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of bright colors. Thou shalt see
Gold tarnished, and the gray above the green;
And as the thing thou seest thy face shall be,
And no more as the thing beforetime seen.

---

*A Match.* 5. closes, enclosures.

*A Ballad of Burdens.* This poem is arranged in a modified form of the French *ballade.* See note on *A Ballad of Dreamland*, page 713.

And thou shalt say of mercy, "It hath been,"
And living, watch the old lips and loves expire,
And talking, tears shall take thy breath between;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of sad sayings. In that day
Thou shalt tell all thy days and hours, and tell
Thy times and ways and words of love, and say
How one was dear and one desirable,
And sweet was life to hear and sweet to smell,
But now with lights reverse the old hours retire
And the last hour is shod with fire from hell;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of four seasons. Rain in spring,
White rain and wind among the tender trees;
A summer of green sorrows gathering,
Rank autumn in a mist of miseries,
With sad face set toward the year, that sees
The charred ash drop out of the dropping pyre,
And winter wan with many maladies;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of dead faces. Out of sight
And out of love, beyond the reach of hands,
Changed in the changing of the dark and light,
They walk and weep about the barren lands
Where no seed is nor any garner stands,
Where in short breaths the doubtful days respire,
And time's turned glass lets through the sighing sands;
This is the end of every man's desire.

The burden of much gladness. Life and lust
Forsake thee, and the face of thy delight;
And underfoot the heavy hour strews dust,
And overhead strange weathers burn and bite;
And where the red was, lo, the bloodless white,
And where truth was, the likeness of a liar,
And where day was, the likeness of the night;
This is the end of every man's desire.

L'ENVOY

Princes, and ye whom pleasure quickeneth,
Heed well this rime before your pleasure tire;
For life is sweet, but after life is death.
This is the end of every man's desire.
(1866)

## RONDEL

Kissing her hair I sat against her feet,
Wove and unwove it, wound and found it sweet;
Made fast therewith her hands, drew down her eyes,
Deep as deep flowers and dreamy like dim skies;
With her own tresses bound and found her fair,
Kissing her hair.

Sleep were no sweeter than her face to me,
Sleep of cold sea-bloom under the cold sea;
What pain could get between my face and hers?
What new sweet thing would love not relish worse?
Unless, perhaps, white death had kissed me there,
Kissing her hair? (1866)

## IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Back to the flower-town, side by side,
The bright months bring,
New-born, the bridegroom and the bride,
Freedom and spring.

The sweet land laughs from sea to sea,
Filled full of sun;
All things come back to her, being free;
All things but one.

In many a tender wheaten plot
Flowers that were dead
Live, and old suns revive; but not
That holier head.

By this white wandering waste of sea,
Far north, I hear
One face shall never turn to me
As once this year;

Shall never smile and turn and rest
On mine as there,
Nor one most sacred hand be prest
Upon my hair.

I came as one whose thoughts half linger,
Half run before;

---

*Rondel.* The rondel is a French lyric form consisting of ten to fourteen lines usually running on two rimes. It contains a refrain taken from the beginning of the first line.

*In Memory of Walter Savage Landor.* See Critical Notes.
1. **flower-town,** Florence, where Landor died in September, 1864. 4. **Freedom.** Both Landor and Swinburne were greatly interested in Italy's struggle for freedom from the rule of Austria. In 1865, about the time this poem was written, Florence was chosen as the capital of United Italy. 21. **I came,** etc. Swinburne had visited Landor at Florence in the spring of 1864.

The youngest to the oldest singer
That England bore.

I found him whom I shall not find
Till all grief end,
In holiest age our mightiest mind,
Father and friend.

But thou, if anything endure,
If hope there be,
O spirit that man's life left pure,
Man's death set free,

Not with disdain of days that were
Look earthward now;
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
The imperial brow;

Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot

Move thee no more; but love at least
And reverent heart
May move thee, royal and released,
Soul, as thou art.

And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.

So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name
As morning-star with evening-star
His faultless fame. (1866)

## DOLORES

### NOTRE-DAME DES SEPT DOULEURS

Cold eyelids that hide like a jewel
Hard eyes that grow soft for an hour;
The heavy white limbs, and the cruel
Red mouth like a venomous flower;
When these are gone by with their glories,
What shall rest of thee then, what remain,
O mystic and somber Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain?

Seven sorrows the priests give their Virgin;
But thy sins, which are seventy times seven,
Seven ages would fail thee to purge in,
And then they would haunt thee in heaven:
Fierce midnights and famishing morrows,
And the loves that complete and control
All the joys of the flesh, all the sorrows
That wear out the soul.

O garment not golden but gilded,
O garden where all men may dwell,
O tower not of ivory, but builded
By hands that reach heaven from hell;
O mystical rose of the mire,
O house not of gold but of gain,
O house of unquenchable fire,
Our Lady of Pain!

O lips full of lust and of laughter,
Curled snakes that are fed from my breast,
Bite hard, lest remembrance come after
And press with new lips where you pressed.
For my heart too springs up at the pressure,
Mine eyelids too moisten and burn;
Ah, feed me and fill me with pleasure,
Ere pain come in turn.

In yesterday's reach and tomorrow's,
Out of sight though they lie of today,
There have been and there yet shall be sorrows
That smite not and bite not in play.
The life and the love thou despisest,
These hurt us indeed, and in vain,
O wise among women, and wisest,
Our Lady of Pain.

Who gave thee thy wisdom? what stories
That stung thee, what visions that smote?
Wert thou pure and a maiden, Dolores,
When desire took thee first by the throat?
What bud was the shell of a blossom
That all men may smell to and pluck?
What milk fed thee first at what bosom?
What sins gave thee suck?

We shift and bedeck and bedrape us,
Thou art noble and nude and antique;
Libitina thy mother, Priapus
Thy father, a Tuscan and Greek.
We play with light loves in the portal,
And wince and relent and refrain;
Loves die, and we know thee immortal,
Our Lady of Pain.

Fruits fail and love dies and time ranges;
Thou art fed with perpetual breath,
And alive after infinite changes,
And fresh from the kisses of death;
Of languors rekindled and rallied,
Of barren delights and unclean,
Things monstrous and fruitless, a pallid
And poisonous queen.

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*Dolores.* See Critical Notes.

*Subtitle.* **Notre-Dame,** etc., Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows. (See note on Browning's *Up at a Villa—Down in the City*, 52, page 223.)

19. **tower . . . ivory.** Cf. *Song of Solomon*, 7:4.—"Thy neck is as a tower of ivory." 49-52. **We shift . . . Greek.** These lines are quoted in Kipling's story of "In the Rukh," *The Jungle Book.* See Critical Notes. 51. **Libitina,** an ancient Italian goddess of gardens and voluptuous pleasures. She is the Tuscan of line 52. **Priapus.** See note on *Faustine*, 146, page 656.

Could you hurt me, sweet lips, though I hurt you?
Men touch them, and change in a trice
The lilies and languors of virtue
For the raptures and roses of vice;
Those lie where thy foot on the floor is,
These crown and caress thee and chain,
O splendid and sterile Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

There are sins it may be to discover,
There are deeds it may be to delight.
What new work wilt thou find for thy lover,
What new passions for daytime or night?
What spells that they know not a word of
Whose lives are as leaves overblown?
What tortures undreamt of, unheard of,
Unwritten, unknown?

Ah, beautiful passionate body
That never has ached with a heart!
On thy mouth though the kisses are bloody,
Though they sting till it shudder and smart,
More kind than the love we adore is,
They hurt not the heart or the brain,
O bitter and tender Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

As our kisses relax and redouble,
From the lips and the foam and the fangs
Shall no new sin be born for men's trouble,
No dream of impossible pangs?
With the sweet of the sins of old ages
Wilt thou satiate thy soul as of yore?
Too sweet is the rind, say the sages,
Too bitter the core.

Hast thou told all thy secrets the last time,
And bared all thy beauties to one?
Ah, where shall we go then for pastime,
If the worst that can be has been done?
But sweet as the rind was the core is;
We are fain of thee still, we are fain,
O sanguine and subtle Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

By the hunger of change and emotion,
By the thirst of unbearable things,
By despair, the twin-born of devotion,
By the pleasure that winces and stings,
The delight that consumes the desire,
The desire that outruns the delight,
By the cruelty deaf as a fire
And blind as the night,

By the ravenous teeth that have smitten
Through the kisses that blossom and bud,
By the lips intertwisted and bitten
Till the foam has a savor of blood,
By the pulse as it rises and falters,
By the hands as they slacken and strain,
I adjure thee, respond from thine altars,
Our Lady of Pain.

Wilt thou smile as a woman disdaining
The light fire in the veins of a boy?
But he comes to thee sad, without feigning,
Who has wearied of sorrow and joy;
Less careful of labor and glory
Than the elders whose hair has uncurled;
And young, but with fancies as hoary
And gray as the world.

I have passed from the outermost portal
To the shrine where a sin is a prayer;
What care though the service be mortal?
O our Lady of Torture, what care?
All thine the last wine that I pour is,
The last in the chalice we drain,
O fierce and luxurious Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

All thine the new wine of desire,
The fruit of four lips as they clung
Till the hair and the eyelids took fire,
The foam of a serpentine tongue,
The froth of the serpents of pleasure,
More salt than the foam of the sea,
Now felt as a flame, now at leisure
As wine shed for me.

Ah, thy people, thy children, thy chosen,
Marked cross from the womb and perverse!
They have found out the secret to cozen
The gods that constrain us and curse;
They alone, they are wise, and none other;
Give me place, even me, in their train,
O my sister, my spouse, and my mother,
Our Lady of Pain.

For the crown of our life as it closes
Is darkness, the fruit thereof dust;
No thorns go as deep as a rose's,
And love is more cruel than lust.
Time turns the old days to derision,
Our loves into corpses or wives;
And marriage and death and division
Make barren our lives.

And pale from the past we draw nigh thee,
And satiate with comfortless hours;
And we know thee, how all men belie thee,
And we gather the fruit of thy flowers;
The passion that slays and recovers,
The pangs and the kisses that rain
On the lips and the limbs of thy lovers,
Our Lady of Pain.

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67-68. **The lilies . . . vice.** See Critical Notes for Chesterton's comment on these lines.

The desire of thy furious embraces
Is more than the wisdom of years,
On the blossom though blood lie in traces,
Though the foliage be sodden with tears.
For the lords in whose keeping the door is
That opens on all who draw breath
Gave the cypress to love, my Dolores,
The myrtle to death.

And they laughed, changing hands in the measure,
And they mixed and made peace after strife;
Pain melted in tears, and was pleasure;
Death tingled with blood, and was life.
Like lovers they melted and tingled,
In the dusk of thine innermost fane;
In the darkness they murmured and mingled,
Our Lady of Pain.

In a twilight where virtues are vices,
In thy chapels, unknown of the sun,
To a tune that enthralls and entices,
They were wed, and the twain were as one.
For the tune from thine altar hath sounded
Since God bade the world's work begin,
And the fume of thine incense abounded,
To sweeten the sin.

Love listens, and paler than ashes,
Through his curls as the crown on them slips,
Lifts languid wet eyelids and lashes,
And laughs with insatiable lips.
Thou shalt hush him with heavy caresses,
With music that scares the profane;
Thou shalt darken his eyes with thy tresses,
Our Lady of Pain.

Thou shalt blind his bright eyes though he wrestle,
Thou shalt chain his light limbs though he strive;
In his lips all thy serpents shall nestle,
In his hands all thy cruelties thrive.
In the daytime thy voice shall go through him,
In his dreams he shall feel thee and ache;
Thou shalt kindle by night and subdue him
Asleep and awake.

Thou shalt touch and make redder his roses
With juice not of fruit nor of bud;
When the sense in the spirit reposes,
Thou shalt quicken the soul through the blood.
Thine, thine the one grace we implore is,
Who would live and not languish or feign,
O sleepless and deadly Dolores,
Our Lady of Pain.

Dost thou dream, in a respite of slumber,
In a lull of the fires of thy life,
Of the days without name, without number,
When thy will stung the world into strife;
When, a goddess, the pulse of thy passion
Smote kings as they reveled in Rome;
And they hailed thee re-risen, O Thalassian,
Foam-white, from the foam?

When thy lips had such lovers to flatter;
When the city lay red from thy rods,
And thine hands were as arrows to scatter
The children of change and their gods;
When the blood of thy foemen made fervent
A sand never moist from the main,
As one smote them, their lord and thy servant,
Our Lady of Pain.

On sands by the storm never shaken,
Nor wet from the washing of tides;
Nor by foam of the waves overtaken,
Nor winds that the thunder bestrides;
But red from the print of thy paces,
Made smooth for the world and its lords,
Ringed round with a flame of fair faces,
And splendid with swords.

There the gladiator, pale for thy pleasure,
Drew bitter and perilous breath;
There torments laid hold on the treasure
Of limbs too delicious for death;
When thy gardens were lit with live torches;
When the world was a steed for thy rein;
When the nations lay prone in thy porches,
Our Lady of Pain.

When, with flame all around him aspirant,
Stood flushed, as a harp-player stands,
The implacable beautiful tyrant,
Rose-crowned, having death in his hands;
And a sound as the sound of loud water
Smote far through the flight of the fires,
And mixed with the lightning of slaughter
A thunder of lyres.

Dost thou dream of what was and no more is,
The old kingdoms of earth and the kings?
Dost thou hunger for these things, Dolores,
For these, in a world of new things?

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175. **cypress.** The cypress was an emblem of mourning; the myrtle was sacred to Venus. Swinburne reverses the traditions.

223. **Thalassian,** Venus (Aphrodite). The word means *born of the sea.* According to tradition Aphrodite was born of the foam of the sea. 228. **children of change,** those who introduced the new religion of Christianity. 229. **blood of thy foemen,** a reference to the persecution of the Christians by the Roman Cæsars, pagan followers of Venus. 230. **A sand,** the arena of the Coliseum. 231. **one,** Nero, Roman emperor (54-68). 245. **gardens . . . torches.** Nero used burning Christians as torches in his garden. 251. **beautiful tyrant,** Nero, who is said to have played upon the harp while Rome burned.

But thy bosom no fasts could emaciate,
No hunger compel to complain
Those lips that no bloodshed could satiate,
Our Lady of Pain.

As of old when the world's heart was lighter,
Through thy garments the grace of thee glows,
The white wealth of thy body made whiter
By the blushes of amorous blows,
And seamed with sharp lips and fierce fingers,
And branded by kisses that bruise;
When all shall be gone that now lingers,
Ah, what shall we lose?

Thou wert fair in the fearless old fashion,
And thy limbs are as melodies yet,
And move to the music of passion
With lithe and lascivious regret.
What ailed us, O gods, to desert you
For creeds that refuse and restrain?
Come down and redeem us from virtue,
Our Lady of Pain.

All shrines that were Vestal are flameless,
But the flame has not fallen from this;
Though obscure be the god, and though nameless
The eyes and the hair that we kiss;
Low fires that love sits by and forges
Fresh heads for his arrows and thine;
Hair loosened and soiled in mid orgies
With kisses and wine.

Thy skin changes country and color,
And shrivels or swells to a snake's.
Let it brighten and bloat and grow duller,
We know it, the flames and the flakes,
Red brands on it smitten and bitten,
Round skies where a star is a strain,
And the leaves with their litanies written,
Our Lady of Pain.

On thy bosom though many a kiss be,
There are none such as knew it of old.
Was it Alciphron once or Arisbe,
Male ringlets or feminine gold,
That thy lips met with under the statue,
Whence a look shot out sharp after thieves
From the eyes of the garden god at you
Across the fig-leaves?

Then still, through dry seasons and moister,
One god had a wreath to his shrine;
Then love was the pearl of his oyster,
And Venus rose red out of wine.
We have all done amiss, choosing rather
Such loves as the wise gods disdain;
Intercede for us thou with thy father,
Our Lady of Pain.

In spring he had crowns of his garden,
Red corn in the heat of the year,
Then hoary green olives that harden
When the grape-blossom freezes with fear;
And milk-budded myrtles with Venus
And vine-leaves with Bacchus he trod;
And ye said, "We have seen, he hath seen us,
A visible god."

What broke off the garlands that girt you?
What sundered you spirit and clay?
Weak sins yet alive are as virtue
To the strength of the sins of that day.
For dried is the blood of thy lover,
Ipsithilla, contracted the vein;
Cry aloud, "Will he rise and recover,
Our Lady of Pain?"

Cry aloud; for the old world is broken.
Cry out; for the Phrygian is priest,
And rears not the bountiful token
And spreads not the fatherly feast.
From the midmost of Ida, from shady
Recesses that murmur at morn,
They have brought and baptized her, Our Lady,
A goddess new-born.

And the chaplets of old are above us,
And the oyster-bed teems out of reach;
Old poets outsing and outlove us,
And Catullus makes mouths at our speech.
Who shall kiss, in thy father's own city,
With such lips as he sang with, again?
Intercede for us all of thy pity,
Our Lady of Pain.

Out of Dindymus heavily laden
Her lions draw bound and unfed
A mother, a mortal, a maiden,
A queen over death and the dead.
She is cold, and her habit is lowly,
Her temple of branches and sods;
Most fruitful and virginal, holy,
A mother of gods.

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281. **shrines . . . flameless.** It was the duty of the Vestal virgins to keep burning the sacred fire of Vesta, goddess of the hearth. 299. **Alciphron,** a Greek rhetorician of the 2d century A.D. He was the author of letters supposed to have been written by celebrated courtesans. **Arisbe,** according to Greek tradition, the wife of King Priam, of Troy. 303. **the garden god,** Priapus. See note on *Faustine*, 146, page 656.

311. **thy father,** Priapus. 314. **corn,** grain, wheat. 318. **Bacchus,** god of wine. 326. **Ipsithilla.** Hypsithilla is one of the lovers mentioned by Catullus in *Carmina*, 32. 330. **the Phrygian,** Cybele, who was worshiped in Phrygia, Asia Minor, as the mother of the gods. Swinburne explains that her devotees were more restrained than those of Venus. Mt. Ida (line 333), in Asia Minor, was a seat of the worship of Cybele. 340. **Catullus,** a famous Roman lyric poet (84-54 B.C.) His love lyrics are noted for their grace and finish. 345. **Dindymus,** a mountain in Phrygia, sacred to Cybele. From her shrine she traveled over the surrounding country in a chariot drawn by lions.

She hath wasted with fire thine high places,
She hath hidden and marred and made sad
The fair limbs of the Loves, the fair faces
Of gods that were goodly and glad.
She slays, and her hands are not bloody;
She moves as a moon in the wane,
White-robed, and thy raiment is ruddy,
Our Lady of Pain.

They shall pass and their places be taken,
The gods and the priests that are pure.
They shall pass, and shalt thou not be shaken?
They shall perish, and shalt thou endure?
Death laughs, breathing close and relentless
In the nostrils and eyelids of lust,
With a pinch in his fingers of scentless
And delicate dust.

But the worm shall revive thee with kisses;
Thou shalt change and transmute as a god,
As the rod to a serpent that hisses,
As the serpent again to a rod.
Thy life shall not cease though thou doff it;
Thou shalt live until evil be slain,
And good shall die first, said thy prophet,
Our Lady of Pain.

Did he lie? did he laugh? does he know it,
Now he lies out of reach, out of breath,
Thy prophet, thy preacher, thy poet,
Sin's child by incestuous Death?
Did he find out in fire at his waking,
Or discern as his eyelids lost light,
When the bands of the body were breaking
And all came in sight?

Who has known all the evil before us,
Or the tyrannous secrets of time?
Though we match not the dead men that bore us
At a song, at a kiss, at a crime —
Though the heathen outface and outlive us,
And our lives and our longings are twain —
Ah, forgive us our virtues, forgive us,
Our Lady of Pain.

Who are we that embalm and embrace thee
With spices and savors of song?
What is time, that his children should face thee?
What am I, that my lips do thee wrong?
I could hurt thee — but pain would delight thee;
Or caress thee — but love would repel;
And the lovers whose lips would excite thee
Are serpents in hell.

Who now shall content thee as they did,
Thy lovers, when temples were built
And the hair of the sacrifice braided
And the blood of the sacrifice spilt,
In Lampsacus fervent with faces,
In Aphaca red from thy reign,
Who embraced thee with awful embraces,
Our Lady of Pain?

Where are they, Cotytto or Venus,
Astarte or Ashtaroth, where?
Do their hands as we touch come between us?
Is the breath of them hot in thy hair?
From their lips have thy lips taken fever,
With the blood of their bodies grown red?
Hast thou left upon earth a believer
If these men are dead?

They were purple of raiment and golden,
Filled full of thee, fiery with wine,
Thy lovers, in haunts unbeholden,
In marvelous chambers of thine.
They are fled, and their footprints escape us,
Who appraise thee, adore, and abstain,
O daughter of Death and Priapus,
Our Lady of Pain.

What ails us to fear overmeasure,
To praise thee with timorous breath,
O mistress and mother of pleasure,
The one thing as certain as death?
We shall change as the things that we cherish,
Shall fade as they faded before,
As foam upon water shall perish,
As sand upon shore.

We shall know what the darkness discovers,
If the grave-pit be shallow or deep;
And our fathers of old, and our lovers,
We shall know if they sleep not or sleep.
We shall see whether hell be not heaven,
Find out whether tares be not grain,
And the joys of thee seventy times seven,
Our Lady of Pain.

(1866)

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371. **rod to a serpent.** Cf. *Exodus*, 7:8-10.—"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 'When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you, then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.'" 375. **good . . . first.** Cf. "He whom the gods love dies young" (Plautus, *Bacchides*, 4, 7, 18). Cf. also Wordsworth's *Excursion*, 1, 500-502.—"The good die first, And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust Burn to the socket." 380. **Sin's . . . Death.** Milton makes Death the son of Sin and Satan, and he makes Death and his mother the parents of the barking hounds of Hell (*Paradise Lost*, 2, 747 ff.).

405. **Lampsacus.** See note on *Faustine*, 146, page 656. 406. **Aphaca**, a city in Asia Minor associated with the worship of Priapus and Venus. 409. **Cotytto**, a Thracian goddess whose festivals were marked with great revelry. 410. **Astarte or Ashtaroth**, the goddess of love and fertility, called Ishtar by the Assyrians. 438. **tares be not grain**, a reference to the parable of the tares sown among the wheat (*Matthew*, 13:25-40).

## THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

Here, where the world is quiet;
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap;
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drive adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;
Today will die tomorrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives forever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any change of light;
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight;
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night. (1866)

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*The Garden of Proserpine.* Proserpine was the daughter of Demeter, the mother earth (see line 59). While gathering flowers in Sicily she was carried off by Pluto, god of Hades, to his realm of darkness and death. Certain groves at the entrance to Hades were sacred to her. By action of the gods, she was allowed to return to the upper world for half of each year. The myth symbolizes the changes in the seasons. The poem is spoken by a Roman pagan. Cf. C. Rossetti's *Dream Land*, page 553, and Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters*, page 28.

14. **Blown . . . flowers,** blossoming flowers that will produce no fruit. They are used as a symbol of unfulfilled desires and dreams. 22. **wot,** know. 27. **poppies,** the flowers of oblivion, sacred to Proserpine, who was often represented with a crown of them on her head (line 50). 34. **corn,** grain, wheat.

83-84. **thank . . . may be.** Cf. Henley's *Invictus*, page 785. 94. **diurnal,** belonging to the daylight.

## SAPPHICS

All the night sleep came not upon my eyelids,
Shed not dew, nor shook nor unclosed a feather,
Yet with lips shut close and with eyes of iron
Stood and beheld me.

Then to me so lying awake a vision
Came without sleep over the seas and touched me,
Softly touched mine eyelids and lips; and I, too,
Full of the vision

Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandaled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters;
Saw the reluctant

Feet, the straining plumes of the doves that drew her,
Looking always, looking with necks reverted,
Back to Lesbos, back to the hills whereunder
Shone Mitylene;

Heard the flying feet of the Loves behind her
Make a sudden thunder upon the waters,
As the thunder flung from the strong unclosing
Wings of a great wind.

So the goddess fled from her place, with awful
Sound of feet and thunder of wings around her;
While behind a clamor of singing women
Severed the twilight.

Ah, the singing, ah, the delight, the passion!
All the Loves wept, listening; sick with anguish,
Stood the crowned nine Muses about Apollo;
Fear was upon them,

While the tenth sang wonderful things they knew not.
Ah, the tenth, the Lesbian! the nine were silent,
None endured the sound of her song for weeping;
Laurel by laurel,

Faded all their crowns; but about her forehead,
Round her woven tresses and ashen temples
White as dead snow, paler than grass in summer,
Ravaged with kisses,

Shone a light of fire as a crown forever.
Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite
Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song.
Yea, by her name, too,

Called her, saying, "Turn to me, O my Sappho";
Yet she turned her face from the Loves, she saw not
Tears for laughter darken immortal eyelids,
Heard not about her

Fearful fitful wings of the doves departing,
Saw not how the bosom of Aphrodite
Shook with weeping, saw not her shaken raiment,
Saw not her hands wrung;

Saw the Lesbians kissing across their smitten
Lutes with lips more sweet than the sound of lute-strings,
Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand, her chosen,
Fairer than all men;

Only saw the beautiful lips and fingers,
Full of songs and kisses and little whispers,
Full of music; only beheld among them
Soar, as a bird soars

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Then rejoiced she, laughing with love, and scattered
Roses, awful roses of holy blossom;
Then the Loves thronged sadly with hidden faces
Round Aphrodite,

Then the Muses, stricken at heart, were silent;
Yea, the gods waxed pale; such a song was that song.
All reluctant, all with a fresh repulsion,
Fled from before her.

All withdrew long since, and the land was barren,
Full of fruitless women and music only.

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*Sapphics.* The title is a term used to designate a verse form employed by Sappho (c.600 B.C.), a Greek poetess of the city of Mitylene, on the island of Lesbos, off the coast of Asia Minor. Each stanza consists of three lines of five feet each and a fourth line of two feet. The prevailing measure is trochaic with a dactyl in the third foot of the long lines and in the first foot of the short lines.

9. **Aphrodite,** goddess of love. She was often represented as drawn by doves. 27. **nine Muses.** See note on Clough's *In the Depths*, 2, page 404. Apollo was the god of poetry and music. He presided over the Muses. 29. **the tenth.** Sappho was called the "tenth muse." 32. **laurel.** The laurel, used in crowning poets, was sacred to the gods.

Now perchance, when winds are assuaged at sunset,
Lulled at the dewfall,

By the gray seaside, unassuaged, unheard of,
Unbeloved, unseen in the ebb of twilight,
Ghosts of outcast women return lamenting,
Purged not in Lethe,

Clothed about with flame and with tears, and singing
Songs that move the heart of the shaken heaven,
Songs that break the heart of the earth with pity,
Hearing, to hear them.

(1866)

## DEDICATION TO *POEMS AND BALLADS*

The sea gives her shells to the shingle,
The earth gives her streams to the sea;
They are many, but my gift is single,
My verses, the first fruits of me.
Let the wind take the green and the gray leaf,
Cast forth without fruit upon air;
Take rose-leaf and vine-leaf and bay-leaf
Blown loose from the hair.

The night shakes them round me in legions,
Dawn drives them before her like dreams;
Time sheds them like snows on strange regions,
Swept shoreward on infinite streams;
Leaves pallid and somber and ruddy,
Dead fruits of the fugitive years;
Some stained as with wine and made bloody,
And some as with tears.

Some scattered in seven years' traces,
As they fell from the boy that was then;
Long left among idle green places,
Or gathered but now among men;
On seas full of wonder and peril,
Blown white round the capes of the north;
Or in islands where myrtles are sterile
And loves bring not forth.

O daughters of dreams and of stories
That life is not wearied of yet,
Faustine, Fragoletta, Dolores,
Félise and Yolande and Juliette,
Shall I find you not still, shall I miss you,
When sleep, that is true or that seems,
Comes back to me hopeless to kiss you,
O daughters of dreams?

They are past as a slumber that passes,
As the dew of a dawn of old time;
More frail than the shadows on glasses,
More fleet than a wave or a rime.
As the waves after ebb drawing seaward,
When their hollows are full of the night,
So the birds that flew singing to me-ward
Recede out of sight.

The songs of dead seasons, that wander
On wings of articulate words;
Lost leaves that the shore-wind may squander,
Light flocks of untameable birds;
Some sang to me dreaming in class time
And truant in hand as in tongue;
For the youngest were born of boy's pastime,
The eldest are young.

Is there shelter while life in them lingers,
Is there hearing for songs that recede,
Tunes touched from a harp with man's fingers
Or blown with boy's mouth in a reed?
Is there place in the land of your labor,
Is there room in your world of delight,
Where change has not sorrow for neighbor
And day has not night?

In their wings though the sea-wind yet quivers,
Will you spare not a space for them there
Made green with the running of rivers
And gracious with temperate air;
In the fields and the turreted cities,
That cover from sunshine and rain
Fair passions and bountiful pities
And loves without stain?

In a land of clear colors and stories,
In a region of shadowless hours,
Where earth has a garment of glories
And a murmur of musical flowers;
In woods where the spring half uncovers
The flush of her amorous face,
By the waters that listen for lovers,
For these is there place?

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76. **Purged not in Lethe,** unable to secure oblivion by drinking of the water of Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in Hades.

*Dedication to Poems and Ballads.* This dedication to the first series of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* was addressed to Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-98), an English painter noted for highly decorative design. He was a member of the Pre-Raphaelite group of artists, a pupil of Rossetti's, and a friend of Swinburne's.

1. **shingle,** coarse rounded stones on the seashore. 7. **bay-leaf,** laurel-leaf, sacred to the gods. 17. **seven years' traces.** Evidently the poems in the volume were written between 1859 and 1866. 23. **myrtles.** Poets were crowned with wreaths of myrtle, sacred to the gods.

27-28. **Faustine . . . Juliette,** names of women appearing in the poems of the 1866 volume. 45. **in class time,** while he was at Eton, 1849-53. He was at Oxford 1856-59.

For the song-birds of sorrow, that muffle
Their music as clouds do their fire;
For the storm-birds of passion, that ruffle
Wild wings in a wind of desire;
In the stream of the storm as it settles
Blown seaward, borne far from the sun,
Shaken loose on the darkness like petals
Dropped one after one?

Though the world of your hands be more gracious
And lovelier in lordship of things
Clothed round by sweet art with the spacious
Warm heaven of her imminent wings,
Let them enter, unfledged and nigh fainting,
For the love of old loves and lost times;
And receive in your palace of painting
This revel of rimes.

Though the seasons of man full of losses
Make empty the years full of youth,
If but one thing be constant in crosses,
Change lays not her hand upon truth;
Hopes die, and their tombs are for token
That the grief as the joy of them ends
Ere time that breaks all men has broken
The faith between friends.

Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
There is help if the heaven has one;
Though the skies be discrowned of the sunlight
And the earth dispossessed of the sun,
They have moonlight and sleep for repayment,
When, refreshed as a bride and set free,
With stars and sea-winds in her raiment,
Night sinks on the sea. (1866)

## AVE ATQUE VALE

### IN MEMORY OF CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Shall I strew on thee rose or rue or laurel,
Brother, on this that was the veil of thee?
Or quiet sea-flower molded by the sea,
Or simplest growth of meadow-sweet or sorrel,
Such as the summer-sleepy Dryads weave,
Waked up by snow-soft sudden rains at eve?
Or wilt thou rather, as on earth before,
Half-faded fiery blossoms, pale with heat
And full of bitter summer, but more sweet
To thee than gleanings of a northern shore
Trod by no tropic feet?

For always thee the fervid languid glories
Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies;
Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories,
The barren kiss of piteous wave to wave
That knows not where is that Leucadian grave
Which hides too deep the supreme head of song.
Ah, salt and sterile as her kisses were,
The wild sea winds her and the green gulfs bear
Hither and thither, and vex and work her wrong,
Blind gods that cannot spare.

Thou sawest, in thine old singing season, brother,
Secrets and sorrows unbeheld of us;
Fierce loves, and lovely leaf-buds poisonous,
Bare to thy subtler eye, but for none other
Blowing by night in some unbreathed-in clime;
The hidden harvest of luxurious time,
Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech;
And where strange dreams in a tumultuous sleep
Make the shut eyes of stricken spirits weep;
And with each face thou sawest the shadow on each,
Seeing as men sow men reap.

O sleepless heart and somber soul unsleeping,
That were athirst for sleep and no more life
And no more love, for peace and no more strife!
Now the dim gods of death have in their keeping
Spirit and body and all the springs of song,
Is it well now where love can do no wrong,
Where stingless pleasure has no foam or fang
Behind the unopening closure of her lips?
Is it not well where soul from body slips
And flesh from bone divides without a pang
As dew from flower-bell drips?

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81. **the world . . . hands,** the paintings of Burne-Jones.

*Ave Atque Vale.* See note on Tennyson's "*Frater Ave Atque Vale*," page 154. Baudelaire (1821-67) was a French poet. See Critical Notes.

1. **rose . . . laurel.** The rose is a symbol of love, rue of remembrance; the laurel is sacred to poetry. 2. **veil,** the body of Baudelaire. 5. **Dryads,** wood nymphs. 8-11. **fiery blossoms,** etc., a reference to the morbid and passionate verse of Baudelaire, and to his visit to India in 1841-42.

15. **Where the sea sobs,** etc., a reference to the tradition that because of disdained love the Greek poetess Sappho (c. 600 B.C.), born on the island of Lesbos off the coast of Asia Minor, cast herself into the sea from the rocky heights of Leucas, one of the Ionian Islands, west of Greece. Baudelaire refers to Sappho's death in his *Lesbos.* 33. **as men . . . reap.** Cf. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (*Galatians*, 6:7).

It is enough; the end and the beginning
Are one thing to thee, who art past the end.
O hand unclasped of unbeholden friend,
For thee no fruits to pluck, no palms for winning,
No triumph and no labor and no lust,
Only dead yew-leaves and a little dust.
O quiet eyes wherein the light saith naught,
Whereto the day is dumb, nor any night
With obscure finger silences your sight,
Nor in your speech the sudden soul speaks thought,
Sleep, and have sleep for light.

Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over,
Dreams and desires and somber songs and sweet,
Hast thou found place at the great knees and feet
Of some pale Titan-woman like a lover,
Such as thy vision here solicited,
Under the shadow of her fair vast head,
The deep division of prodigious breasts,
The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep,
The weight of awful tresses that still keep
The savor and shade of old-world pine-forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep?

Hast thou found any likeness for thy vision?
O gardener of strange flowers, what bud, what bloom,
Hast thou found sown, what gathered in the gloom?
What of despair, of rapture, of derision,
What of life is there, what of ill or good?
Are the fruits gray like dust or bright like blood?
Does the dim ground grow any seed of ours,
The faint fields quicken any terrene root,
In low lands where the sun and moon are mute
And all the stars keep silence? Are there flowers
At all, or any fruit?

Alas, but though my flying song flies after,
O sweet strange elder singer, thy more fleet
Singing, and footprints of thy fleeter feet,
Some dim derision of mysterious laughter
From the blind tongueless warders of the dead,
Some gainless glimpse of Proserpine's veiled head,
Some little sound of unregarded tears
Wept by effaced unprofitable eyes,
And from pale mouths some cadence of dead sighs —
These only, these the hearkening spirit hears,
Sees only such things rise.

Thou art far too far for wings of words to follow,
Far too far off for thought or any prayer.
What ails us with thee, who art wind and air?
What ails us gazing where all seen is hollow?
Yet with some fancy, yet with some desire,
Dreams pursue death as winds a flying fire,
Our dreams pursue our dead and do not find.
Still, and more swift than they, the thin flame flies,
The low light fails us in elusive skies,
Still the foiled earnest ear is deaf, and blind
Are still the eluded eyes.

Not thee, O never thee, in all time's changes,
Not thee, but this the sound of thy sad soul,
The shadow of thy swift spirit, this shut scroll
I lay my hand on, and not death estranges
My spirit from communion of thy song —
These memories and these melodies that throng
Veiled porches of a Muse funereal —
These I salute, these touch, these clasp and fold
As though a hand were in my hand to hold,
Or through mine ears a mourning musical
Of many mourners rolled.

I among these, I also, in such station
As when the pyre was charred, and piled the sods,
And offering to the dead made, and their gods,
The old mourners had, standing to make libation,
I stand, and to the gods and to the dead
Do reverence without prayer or praise and shed
Offering to these unknown, the gods of gloom,
And what of honey and spice my seedlands bear,
And what I may of fruits in this chilled air,
And lay, Orestes-like, across the tomb
A curl of severed hair.

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59. **Titan-woman,** a reference to Baudelaire's poem *La Géante* (*The Giantess*). The Titans were giants of Greek mythology who rebelled against the gods. 74. **terrene,** earthly. 83. **Prosperpine's . . . head.** See note on *The Garden of Proserpine*, page 687.

106. **Muse funereal.** See note on Clough's *In the Depths*, 2, page 404. 120-21. **Orestes-like,** etc. Orestes was the son of Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, Greece, who led the expedition against Troy. The incident of Orestes's offering a tress of his hair as a sacrifice to the dead is found in the opening scene of the *Choëphori*, a drama by Æschylus (525-456 B.C.), the great Greek tragic dramatist. The King (line 123) is Agamemnon. Electra (line 129) is the sister of Orestes. They meet at the bier of their father slain by his wife (Clytemnestra) and her paramour, Ægisthus.

But by no hand nor any treason stricken,
Not like the low-lying head of Him, the King,
The flame that made of Troy a ruinous thing,
Thou liest, and on this dust no tears could quicken
There fall no tears like theirs that all men hear
Fall tear by sweet imperishable tear
Down the opening leaves of holy poet's pages.
Thee not Orestes, not Electra mourns;
But bending us-ward with memorial urns
The most high Muses that fulfill all ages
Weep, and our god's heart yearns.

For, sparing of his sacred strength, not often
Among us darkling here the lord of light
Makes manifest his music and his might
In hearts that open and in lips that soften
With the soft flame and heat of songs that shine.
Thy lips indeed he touched with bitter wine,
And nourished them indeed with bitter bread;
Yet surely from his hand thy soul's food came,
The fire that scarred thy spirit at his flame
Was lighted, and thine hungering heart he fed
Who feeds our hearts with fame.

Therefore he too now at thy soul's sunsetting,
God of all suns and songs, he too bends down
To mix his laurel with thy cypress crown,
And save thy dust from blame and from forgetting.
Therefore he too, seeing all thou wert and art,
Compassionate, with sad and sacred heart,
Mourns thee of many his children the last dead,
And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes,
And over thine irrevocable head
Sheds light from the under skies.

And one weeps with him in the ways Lethean,
And stains with tears her changing bosom chill —
That obscure Venus of the hollow hill,
That thing transformed which was the Cytherean,
With lips that lost their Grecian laugh divine
Long since, and face no more called Erycine;
A ghost, a bitter and luxurious god.
Thee also with fair flesh and singing spell
Did she, a sad and second prey, compel
Into the footless places once more trod,
And shadows hot from hell.

And now no sacred staff shall break in blossom,
No choral salutation lure to light
A spirit with perfume and sweet night
And love's tired eyes and hands and barren bosom.
There is no help for these things; none to mend
And none to mar; not all our songs, O friend,
Will make death clear or make life durable.
Howbeit with rose and ivy and wild vine
And with wild notes about this dust of thine
At least I fill the place where white dreams dwell
And wreathe an unseen shrine.

Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon,
If sweet, give thanks; thou hast no more to live;
And to give thanks is good, and to forgive.
Out of the mystic and the mournful garden
Where all day through thine hands in barren braid
Wove the sick flowers of secrecy and shade,
Green buds of sorrow and sin, and remnants gray,
Sweet-smelling, pale with poison, sanguine-hearted,
Passions that sprang from sleep and thoughts that started,
Shall death not bring us all as thee one day
Among the days departed?

For thee, O now a silent soul, my brother,
Take at my hands this garland, and farewell.
Thin is the leaf, and chill the wintry smell,

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134. **lord of light,** Apollo, god of the sun and of poetry and music. 146. **cypress.** The cypress is a symbol of mourning and is a common tree in graveyards. See note on line 1. 155. **ways Lethean,** the paths of forgetfulness. Lethe was the river of forgetfulness in Hades. 157. **Venus . . . hill.** In the medieval legend of Tannhäuser, Venus appears transformed into an enchantress who lures victims into the caverns of Hörselberg (the Mountain of Venus), a mountain between the cities of Eisenach and Gotha, in Germany.

158. **the Cytherean,** Aphrodite (Venus), who according to tradition arose from the foam of the sea near the island of Cythera, southeast of Greece. 160. **Erycine,** a title of Venus derived from Mt. Eryx, in Sicily, where she was worshiped as the goddess of heavenly love. 166. **staff . . . blossom.** After the knight Tannhäuser had spent a year with Venus in her cavern, he made a visit of penance to Rome and asked for absolution, but Pope Urban IV (1261-64) said that he would grant no mercy until his staff should burst into bloom. Shortly thereafter the staff began to bud, but the knight had returned to Venus. See *Laus Veneris*, 346-372, page 669. Cf. the story of the blossoming of Aaron's rod in *Numbers*, 17. See also Morris's *The Hill of Venus*.

And chill the solemn earth, a fatal mother,
With sadder than the Niobean womb,
And in the hollow of her breasts a tomb.
Content thee, howsoe'er, whose days are done;
There lies not any troublous thing before,
Nor sight nor sound to war against thee more,
For whom all winds are quiet as the sun,
All waters as the shore. (1868)

## PRELUDE TO *SONGS BEFORE SUNRISE*

Between the green bud and the red
Youth sat and sang by Time, and shed
From eyes and tresses flowers and tears,
From heart and spirit hopes and fears,
Upon the hollow stream whose bed
Is channeled by the foamless years;
And with the white the gold-haired head
Mixed running locks, and in Time's ears
Youth's dreams hung singing, and Time's truth
Was half not harsh in the ears of Youth.

Between the bud and the blown flower
Youth talked with joy and grief an hour,
With footless joy and wingless grief
And twin-born faith and disbelief
Who share the seasons to devour;
And long ere these made up their sheaf
Felt the winds round him shake and shower
The rose-red and the blood-red leaf,
Delight whose germ grew never grain,
And passion dyed in its own pain.

Then he stood up, and trod to dust
Fear and desire, mistrust and trust,
And dreams of bitter sleep and sweet,
And bound for sandals on his feet
Knowledge and patience of what must
And what things may be, in the heat
And cold of years that rot and rust
And alter; and his spirit's meat
Was freedom, and his staff was wrought
Of strength, and his cloak woven of thought.

For what has he whose will sees clear
To do with doubt and faith and fear,
Swift hopes and slow despondencies?
His heart is equal with the sea's
And with the sea-wind's, and his ear
Is level to the speech of these,
And his soul communes and takes cheer
With the actual earth's equalities,
Air, light, and night, hills, winds, and streams,
And seeks not strength from strengthless dreams.

His soul is even with the sun
Whose spirit and whose eye are one,
Who seeks not stars by day, nor light
And heavy heat of day by night.
Him can no god cast down, whom none
Can lift in hope beyond the height
Of fate and nature and things done
By the calm rule of might and right
That bids men be and bear and do,
And die beneath blind skies or blue.

To him the lights of even and morn
Speak no vain things of love or scorn,
Fancies and passions miscreate
By man in things dispassionate.
Nor holds he fellowship forlorn
With souls that pray and hope and hate,
And doubt they had better not been born,
And fain would lure or scare off fate
And charm their doomsman from their doom
And make fear dig its own false tomb.

He builds not half of doubts and half
Of dreams his own soul's cenotaph,
Whence hopes and fears with helpless eyes,
Wrapped loose in cast-off cerecloths, rise
And dance and wring their hands and laugh,
And weep thin tears and sigh light sighs,
And without living lips would quaff
The living spring in man that lies,
And drain his soul of faith and strength
It might have lived on a life's length.

He hath given himself and hath not sold
To God for heaven or man for gold,
Or grief for comfort that it gives,
Or joy for grief's restoratives.
He hath given himself to time, whose fold
Shuts in the mortal flock that lives
On its plain pasture's heat and cold
And the equal year's alternatives.
Earth, heaven, and time, death, life, and he,
Endure while they shall be to be.

"Yet between death and life are hours
To flush with love and hide in flowers;
What profit save in these?" men cry.
"Ah, see, between soft earth and sky,
What only good things here are ours!"

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192. **sadder . . . womb.** See note on Mrs. Browning's *The Dead Pan*, 83, page 363.

*Prelude to Songs before Sunrise.* In this Prelude Swinburne explains that his former interest in love, as expressed in his first volume of verse, has given place to a new devotion to the spirit of Freedom—freedom from the tyranny of government, of religion, of passion and prejudice, etc. Some of the poems in the volume entitled *Songs before Sunrise* were inspired chiefly by Italy's long struggle for freedom from the rule of Austria. Poems on pages 695-707 of this volume were included in *Songs before Sunrise.*

1. **Between the green bud,** etc. Lines 1-2 refer to the composition of the poems in the first series of *Poems and Ballads*, published in 1866.

62. **cenotaph,** tomb or monument. 64. **cerecloths,** waxed grave clothes.

They say, "what better wouldst thou try,
What sweeter sing of? or what powers
Serve, that will give thee ere thou die
More joy to sing and be less sad,
More heart to play and grow more glad?"

Play then and sing; we too have played,
We likewise, in that subtle shade.
We too have twisted through our hair
Such tendrils as the wild Loves wear,
And heard what mirth the Mænads made,
Till the wind blew our garlands bare
And left their roses disarrayed,
And smote the summer with strange air,
And disengirdled and discrowned
The limbs and locks that vine-wreaths bound.

We too have tracked by star-proof trees
The tempest of the Thyiades
Scare the loud night on hills that hid
The blood-feasts of the Bassarid,
Heard their song's iron cadences
Fright the wolf hungering from the kid,
Outroar the lion-throated seas,
Outchide the north-wind if it chid,
And hush the torrent-tongued ravines
With thunders of their tambourines.

But the fierce flute whose notes acclaim
Dim goddesses of fiery fame,
Cymbal and clamorous kettledrum,
Timbrels and tabrets, all are dumb
That turned the high chill air to flame;
The singing tongues of fire are numb
That called on Cotys by her name
Edonian, till they felt her come
And maddened, and her mystic face
Lightened along the streams of Thrace.

For Pleasure slumberless and pale,
And Passion with rejected veil,
Pass, and the tempest-footed throng
Of hours that follow them with song
Till their feet flag and voices fail,
And lips that were so loud so long
Learn silence, or a wearier wail;
So keen is change, and time so strong,
To weave the robes of life and rend
And weave again till life have end.

But weak is change, but strengthless time,
To take the light from heaven, or climb
The hills of heaven with wasting feet.
Songs they can stop that earth found meet,
But the stars keep their ageless rime;
Flowers they can slay that spring thought sweet,
But the stars keep their spring sublime;
Passions and pleasures can defeat,
Actions and agonies control,
And life and death, but not the soul.

Because man's soul is man's God still,
What wind soever waft his will
Across the waves of day and night
To port or shipwreck, left or right,
By shores and shoals of good and ill;
And still its flame at mainmast height
Through the rent air that foam-flakes fill
Sustains the indomitable light
Whence only man hath strength to steer
Or helm to handle without fear.

Save his own soul's light overhead,
None leads him, and none ever led,
Across birth's hidden harbor-bar,
Past youth where shoreward shallows are,
Through age that drives on toward the red
Vast void of sunset hailed from far,
To the equal waters of the dead;
Save his own soul he hath no star,
And sinks, except his own soul guide,
Helmless in middle turn of tide.

No blast of air or fire of sun
Puts out the light whereby we run
With girdled loins our lamplit race.
And each from each takes heart of grace
And spirit till his turn be done,
And light of face from each man's face
In whom the light of trust is one;
Since only souls that keep their place
By their own light, and watch things roll,
And stand, have light for any soul.

A little time we gain from time
To set our seasons in some chime,
For harsh or sweet or loud or low,
With seasons played out long ago
And souls that in their time and prime
Took part with summer or with snow,
Lived abject lives out or sublime,
And had their chance of seed to sow
For service or disservice done
To those days dead and this their son.

A little time that we may fill
Or with such good works or such ill
As loose the bonds or make them strong
Wherein all manhood suffers wrong.

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95. **Mænads.** See note on line 44, page 658. 101ff. **tracked . . . tempest . . . Scare**, seen the tempests of the Thyiades scare, etc. The Thyiades were women of Attica, Greece, who worshiped Bacchus with great debauchery. 104. **Bassarid**, a worshiper of Bacchus in Lydia and Thrace, Greece. The celebration included licentious excesses and a sacrifice of some animal on the altar of the god. The participants ate the flesh raw. 114. **Timbrels and tabrets**, kinds of small drums, like tambourines. 117. **Cotys**, the same as Cotytto, a goddess whose festivals were marked with licentiousness. Her worship was associated with Mt. Edon, in Thrace, Greece.

163ff. **lamplit race, etc.**, a reference to the ancient lampadedromy, a kind of relay race in which a torch or lighted lamp was passed by each runner to the next. The race was run in honor of some god or goddess.

By rose-hung river and light-foot rill
  There are who rest not; who think long
Till they discern as from a hill
  At the sun's hour of morning song,
Known of souls only, and those souls free,
The sacred spaces of the sea.

(1871)

## SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept,
  Remembering thee,
That for ages of agony hast endured, and slept,
  And wouldst not see.

By the waters of Babylon we stood up and sang,
  Considering thee,
That a blast of deliverance in the darkness rang,
  To set thee free.

And with trumpets and thunderings and with morning song
  Came up the light;
And thy spirit uplifted thee to forget thy wrong
  As day doth night.

And thy sons were dejected not any more, as then
  When thou wast shamed;
When thy lovers went heavily without heart, as men
  Whose life was maimed.

In the desolate distances, with a great desire,
  For thy love's sake,
With our hearts going back to thee, they were filled with fire,
  Were nigh to break.

It was said to us: "Verily ye are great of heart,
  But ye shall bend;
Ye are bondmen and bondwomen, to be scourged and smart,
  To toil and tend."

And with harrows men harrowed us, and subdued with spears,
  And crushed with shame;
And the summer and winter was, and the length of years,
  And no change came.

By the rivers of Italy, by the sacred streams,
  By town, by tower,
There was feasting with reveling, there was sleep with dreams,
  Until thine hour.

And they slept and they rioted on their rose-hung beds,
  With mouths on flame,
And with love-locks vine-chapleted, and with rose-crowned heads
  And robes of shame.

And they knew not their forefathers, nor the hills and streams
  And words of power,
Nor the gods that were good to them, but with songs and dreams
  Filled up their hour.

By the rivers of Italy, by the dry streams' beds,
  When thy time came,
There was casting of crowns from them, from their young men's heads,
  The crowns of shame.

By the horn of Eridanus, by the Tiber mouth,
  As thy day rose,
They arose up and girded them to the north and south,
  By seas, by snows.

As a water in January the frost confines,
  Thy kings bound thee;
As a water in April is, in the new-blown vines,
  Thy sons made free.

And thy lovers that looked for thee, and that mourned from far,
  For thy sake dead,
We rejoiced in the light of thee, in the signal star
  Above thine head.

In thy grief had we followed thee, in thy passion loved,
  Loved in thy loss;
In thy shame we stood fast to thee, with thy pangs were moved,
  Clung to thy cross.

By the hillside of Calvary we beheld thy blood,
  Thy blood-red tears,

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*Super Flumina Babylonis.* The title is translated in the first line, which is quoted from *Psalms*, 137:1.—"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." The Psalm refers to the afflictions of the Jews in captivity in Babylon, the great empire of western Asia. Swinburne has Italy in mind. (See note on Prelude to *Songs before Sunrise*, page 693).

**45. the horn of Eridanus,** the delta of the River Po. Eridanus is its Greek name.

As a mother's in bitterness, an unebbing flood,
Years upon years.

And the north was Gethsemane, without leaf or bloom,
A garden sealed;
And the south was Aceldama, for a sanguine fume
Hid all the field.

By the stone of the sepulcher we returned to weep,
From far, from prison;
And the guards by it keeping it we beheld asleep,
But thou wast risen.

And an angel's similitude by the unsealed grave,
And by the stone;
And the voice was angelical, to whose words God gave
Strength like his own.

"Lo, the graveclothes of Italy that are folded up
In the grave's gloom!
And the guards as men wrought upon with a charmèd cup,
By the open tomb.

"And her body most beautiful, and her shining head,
These are not here;
For your mother, for Italy, is not surely dead;
Have ye no fear.

"As of old time she spake to you, and you hardly heard,
Hardly took heed,
So now also she saith to you, yet another word,
Who is risen indeed.

"By my saying she saith to you, in your ears she saith,
Who hear these things,
Put no trust in men's royalties, nor in great men's breath,
Nor words of kings.

"For the life of them vanishes and is no more seen,
Nor no more known;
Nor shall any remember him if a crown hath been,
Or where a throne.

"Unto each man his handiwork, unto each his crown,
The just Fate gives;
Whoso takes the world's life on him and his own lays down,
He, dying so, lives.

"Whoso bears the whole heaviness of the wronged world's weight
And puts it by,
It is well with him suffering, though he face man's fate;
How should he die?

"Seeing death has no part in him any more, no power
Upon his head;
He has bought his eternity with a little hour,
And is not dead.

"For an hour, if ye look for him, he is no more found,
For one hour's space;
Then ye lift up your eyes to him and behold him crowned,
A deathless face.

"On the mountains of memory, by the world's well-springs,
In all men's eyes,
Where the light of the life of him is on all past things,
Death only dies.

"Not the light that was quenched for us, nor the deeds that were,
Nor the ancient days,
Nor the sorrows not sorrowful, nor the face most fair
Of perfect praise."

So the angel of Italy's resurrection said,
So yet he saith;
So the son of her suffering, that from breasts nigh dead
Drew life, not death.

That the pavement of Golgotha should be white as snow,
Not red, but white;
That the waters of Babylon should no longer flow,
And men see light.

(1871)

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65. **Gethsemane,** the garden outside Jerusalem; the scene of the agony and the arrest of Jesus. 67. **Aceldama,** mentioned in *Acts,* 1:18, as the scene of the suicide of Judas; later called the "Field of Blood." 73. **angel's similitude,** the angel of Italy's resurrection (see line 121).

99ff. **Whoso takes the world's life, etc.** Cf. *Matthew,* 16:25.—"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." 125. **Golgotha,** the place of the Crucifixion.

idea of the Prime mover

## HERTHA

I am that which began;
Out of me the years roll;
Out of me God and man;
I am equal and whole;
God changes, and man, and the form of them bodily; I am the soul.

Before ever land was,
Before ever the sea,
Or soft hair of the grass,
Or fair limbs of the tree,
Or the flesh-colored fruit of my branches, I was, and thy soul was in me.

First life on my sources
First drifted and swam;
Out of me are the forces
That save it or damn;
Out of me man and woman, and wild-beast and bird; before God was, I am.

Beside or above me
Naught is there to go;
Love or unlove me,
Unknow me or know,
I am that which unloves me and loves; I am stricken, and I am the blow.

Seeking the Divine Force

I the mark that is missed
And the arrows that miss,
I the mouth that is kissed
And the breath in the kiss,
The search, and the sought, and the seeker, the soul and the body that is.

I am that thing which blesses
My spirit elate;
That which caresses
With hands uncreate
My limbs unbegotten that measure the length of the measure of fate.

But what thing dost thou now,
Looking Godward, to cry,
"I am I, thou art thou,
I am low, thou art high"?

I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find thou but thyself, thou art I.

I the grain and the furrow,
The plow-cloven clod
And the plowshare drawn thorough,
The germ and the sod,
The deed and the doer, the seed and the sower, the dust which is God.

Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,
Child, underground?
Fire that impassioned thee,
Iron that bound,
Dim changes of water, what thing of all these hast thou known of or found?

Canst thou say in thine heart
Thou has seen with thine eyes
With what cunning of art
Thou wast wrought in what wise,
By what force of what stuff thou wast shapen, and shown on my breast to the skies?

Who hath given, who hath sold it thee,
Knowledge of me?
Hath the wilderness told it thee?
Hast thou learnt of the sea?
Hast thou communed in spirit with night? Have the winds taken counsel with thee?

Have I set such a star
To show light on thy brow
That thou sawest from afar
What I show to thee now?
Have ye spoken as brethren together, the sun and the mountains and thou?

What is here, dost thou know it?
What was, hast thou known?
Prophet nor poet
Nor tripod nor throne
Nor spirit nor flesh can make answer, but only thy mother alone.

Mother, not maker,
Born, and not made;
Though her children forsake her,
Allured or afraid,
Praying prayers to the God of their fashion, she stirs not for all that have prayed.

A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;

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*Hertha.* Hertha was the ancient Germanic goddess of the earth, of fertility, and of growth. In Swinburne's conception, she is much vaster, being regarded as the evolution of the world-soul. Swinburne said of the poem: "Of all I have done I rate *Hertha* highest as a single piece, finding in it the most of lyric force and music combined with the most of condensed and clarified thought" (letter to Stedman, Feb. 21, 1875).

15. **before God was, I am.** Cf. *Exodus*, 3:14.—"And God said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM'"; and *John*, 8:58.—"Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.'" 20-40. **I am the**, etc. The thought of these lines is suggestive of Emerson's *Brahma*, especially lines 10-12.—

"When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings."

41ff. **Hast thou known,** etc. With these questions compare the words spoken to Job by the Lord out of the whirlwind (*Job*, 38-39). 64. **Nor tripod nor throne,** neither priest nor king. The tripod was the altar, supported on three legs, on which the priestesses of Apollo at Delphi sat when they delivered their oracles. 67. **Born, and not made.** These lines are a protest against the idea of a single act of creation. Swinburne conceives nature as a continuous process of evolution.

But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,
To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy life as the light.

I am in thee to save thee,
As my soul in thee saith;
Give thou as I gave thee,
Thy life-blood and breath,
Green leaves of thy labor, white flowers of thy thought, and red fruit of thy death.

Be the ways of thy giving
As mine were to thee;
The free life of thy living,
Be the gift of it free;
Not as servant to lord, nor as master to slave, shalt thou give thee to me.

O children of banishment,
Souls overcast,
Were the lights ye see vanish meant
Alway to last,
Ye would know not the sun overshining the shadows and stars overpast.

I that saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and the shadowless soul is in sight.

The tree many-rooted
That swells to the sky
With frondage red-fruited,
The life-tree am I;
In the buds of your lives is the sap of my leaves; ye shall live and not die.

But the gods of your fashion
That take and that give,
In their pity and passion
That scourge and forgive,
They are worms that are bred in the bark that falls off; they shall die and not live.

My own blood is what stanches
The wounds in my bark;
Stars caught in my branches
Make day of the dark,
And are worshiped as suns till the sunrise shall tread out their fires as a spark.

Where dead ages hide under
The live roots of the tree,
In my darkness the thunder
Makes utterance of me;
In the clash of my boughs with each other ye hear the waves sound of the sea.

That noise is of Time,
As his feathers are spread
And his feet set to climb
Through the boughs overhead,
And my foliage rings round him and rustles, and branches are bent with his tread.

The storm-winds of ages
Blow through me and cease,
The war-wind that rages,
The spring-wind of peace,
Ere the breath of them roughen my tresses, ere one of my blossoms increase.

All sounds of all changes,
All shadows and lights
On the world's mountain-ranges
And stream-riven heights,
Whose tongue is the wind's tongue and language of storm-clouds on earth-shaking nights;

All forms of all faces,
All works of all hands
In unsearchable places
Of time-stricken lands,
All death and all life, and all reigns and all ruins, drop through me as sands.

Though sore be my burden
And more than ye know,
And my growth have no guerdon
But only to grow,
Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above me or deathworms below.

These too have their part in me,
As I too in these;
Such fire is at heart in me,
Such sap is this tree's,
Which hath in it all sounds and all secrets of infinite lands and of seas.

In the spring-colored hours
When my mind was as May's,
There brake forth of me flowers
By centuries of days,
Strong blossoms with perfume of manhood, shot out from my spirit as rays.

And the sound of them springing
And smell of their shoots
Were as warmth and sweet singing
And strength to my roots;
And the lives of my children made perfect with freedom of soul were my fruits.

I bid you but be;
I have need not of prayer;

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88. **lights**, religious creeds and dogmas. 96. **The tree many-rooted**, the mighty ash tree Yggdrasill, supposed, in Norse mythology, to support the entire universe.

I have need of you free
As your mouths of mine air;
That my heart may be greater within me, beholding the fruits of me fair.

More fair than strange fruit is
Of faiths ye espouse;
In me only the root is
That blooms in your boughs;
Behold now your God that ye made you, to feed him with faith of your vows.

In the darkening and whitening
Abysses adored,
With dayspring and lightning
For lamp and for sword,
God thunders in heaven, and his angels are red with the wrath of the Lord.

O my sons, O too dutiful
Toward gods not of me,
Was not I enough beautiful?
Was it hard to be free?
For behold, I am with you, am in you and of you; look forth now and see.

Lo, winged with world's wonders,
With miracles shod,
With the fires of his thunders
For raiment and rod,
God trembles in heaven, and his angels are white with the terror of God.

For his twilight is come on him,
His anguish is here;
And his spirits gaze dumb on him,
Grown gray from his fear;
And his hour taketh hold on him stricken, the last of his infinite year.

Thought made him and breaks him,
Truth slays and forgives;
But to you, as time takes him,
This new thing it gives,
Even love, the beloved Republic, that feeds upon freedom and lives.

For truth only is living,
Truth only is whole,
And the love of his giving
Man's polestar and pole;
Man, pulse of my center, and fruit of my body, and seed of my soul;

One birth of my bosom;
One beam of mine eye;
One topmost blossom
That scales the sky;
Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me, man that is I.

(1871)

## HYMN OF MAN

### (DURING THE SESSION IN ROME OF THE ŒCUMENICAL COUNCIL)

In the gray beginning of years, in the twilight of things that began,
The word of the earth in the ears of the world, was it God? was it man?
The word of the earth to the spheres her sisters, the note of her song,
The sound of her speech in the ears of the starry and sisterly throng,
Was it praise or passion or prayer, was it love or devotion or dread,
When the veils of the shining air first wrapped her jubilant head?
When her eyes new-born of the night saw yet no star out of reach;
When her maiden mouth was alight with the flame of musical speech;
When her virgin feet were set on the terrible heavenly way,
And her virginal lids were wet with the dew of the birth of the day —
Eyes that had looked not on time, and ears that had heard not of death;
Lips that had learned not the rime of change and passionate breath,
The rhythmic anguish of growth, and the motion of mutable things,
Of love that longs and is loath, and plume-plucked hope without wings,
Passions and pains without number, and life that runs and is lame,
From slumber again to slumber, the same race set for the same,
Where the runners outwear each other, but running with lampless hands
No man takes light from his brother till blind at the goal he stands —
Ah, did they know, did they dream of it, counting the cost and the worth?
The ways of her days, did they seem then good to the new-souled earth?
Did her heart rejoice, and the might of her spirit exult in her then,
Child yet no child of the night, and motherless mother of men?

181. **his twilight.** The idea of the twilight of the gods is derived from Norse mythology. This is the period, known as Ragnarok, which involves the destruction of the universe. After this period a new heaven and a new earth will arise out of the sea.

*Hymn of Man.* The twenty-first Œcumenical (general) Council of the church met in Rome from December, 1869, to July, 1870. It voted for the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope on July 18, 1870. Swinburne characterized the *Hymn to Proserpine* (page 676) and the *Hymn of Man* as "the deathsong of spiritual decadence and the birthsong of spiritual renascence."

21ff. **Did her heart rejoice, etc.** The idea expressed in these lines is frequently found in literature. See Critical Notes.

Was it Love brake forth flower-fashion, a bird with gold on his wings,
Lovely, her firstborn passion, and impulse of firstborn things?
Was Love that nestling indeed that under the plumes of the night
Was hatched and hidden as seed in the furrow, and brought forth bright?
Was it Love lay shut in the shell world-shaped, having over him there
Black world-wide wings that impel the might of the night through air?
And bursting his shell as a bird, night shook through her sail-stretched vans,
And her heart as a water was stirred, and its heat was the firstborn man's.
For the waste of the dead void air took form of a world at birth,
And the waters and firmaments were, and light, and the life-giving earth.
The beautiful bird unbegotten that night brought forth without pain
In the fathomless years forgotten whereover the dead gods reign,
Was it love, life, godhead, or fate? We say the spirit is one
That moved on the dark to create out of darkness the stars and the sun.
Before the growth was the grower, and the seed ere the plant was sown;
But what was seed of the sower? and the grain of him, whence was it grown?
Foot after foot ye go back and travail and make yourselves mad;
Blind feet that feel for the track where highway is none to be had.
Therefore the God that ye make you is grievous, and gives not aid,
Because it is but for your sake that the God of your making is made.
Thou and I and he are not gods made men for a span,
But God, if a God there be, is the substance of men which is man.
Our lives are as pulses of pores of his manifold body and breath;
As waves of his sea on the shores where birth is the beacon of death.
We men, the multiform features of man, whatsoever we be,
Re-create him of whom we are creatures, and all we only are he.
For each man of all men is God, but God is the fruit of the whole;
Indivisible spirit and blood, indiscernible body from soul.
Not men's but man's is the glory of godhead, the kingdom of time,
The mountainous ages made hoary with snows for the spirit to climb.
A God with the world inwound whose clay to his footsole clings;
A manifold God fast-bound as with iron of adverse things.
A soul that labors and lives, an emotion, a strenuous breath,
From the flame that its own mouth gives reillumed, and refreshed with death.
In the sea whereof centuries are waves the live God plunges and swims;
His bed is in all men's graves, but the worm hath not hold on his limbs.
Night puts out not his eyes, nor time sheds change on his head;
With such fire as the stars of the skies are the roots of his heart are fed.
Men are the thoughts passing through it, the veins that fulfill it with blood,
With spirit of sense to renew it as springs fulfilling a flood.
Men are the heartbeats of man, the plumes that feather his wings,
Storm-worn, since being began, with the wind and thunder of things.
Things are cruel and blind; their strength detains and deforms;
And the wearying wings of the mind still beat up the stream of their storms.
Still, as one swimming upstream, they strike out blind in the blast,
In thunders of vision and dream, and lightnings of future and past.
We are baffled and caught in the current and bruised upon edges of shoals;
As weeds or as reeds in the torrent of things are the wind-shaken souls.
Spirit by spirit goes under, a foam-bell's bubble of breath,
That blows and opens in sunder and blurs not the mirror of death.
For a worm or a thorn in his path is a man's soul quenched as a flame;
For his lust of an hour or his wrath shall the worm and the man be the same.
O God sore stricken of things! they have wrought him a raiment of pain;
Can a God shut eyelids and wings at a touch on the nerves of the brain?
O shamed and sorrowful God, whose force goes out at a blow!
What world shall shake at his nod? at his coming what wilderness glow?
What help in the work of his hands? what light in the track of his feet?
His days are snowflakes or sands, with cold to consume him and heat.
He is servant with Change for lord, and for wages he hath to his hire

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35-36. **spirit . . . sun.** Cf. the story of creation in *Genesis*, 1.

Folly and force, and a sword that devours, and a ravening fire.
From the bed of his birth to his grave he is driven as a wind at their will;
Lest Change bow down as his slave, and the storm and the sword be still;
Lest earth spread open her wings to the sunward, and sing with the spheres;
Lest man be master of things, to prevail on their forces and fears.
By the spirit are things overcome; they are stark, and the spirit hath breath;
It hath speech, and their forces are dumb; it is living, and things are of death.
But they know not the spirit for master, they feel not force from above,
While man makes love to disaster, and woos desolation with love.
Yea, himself too hath made himself chains, and his own hands plucked out his eyes;
For his own soul only constrains him, his own mouth only denies.
The herds of kings and their hosts and the flocks of the high priests bow
To a master whose face is a ghost's; O thou that wast God, is it thou?
Thou madest man in the garden; thou temptedst man, and he fell;
Thou gavest him poison and pardon for blood and burnt-offering to sell.
Thou hast sealed thine elect to salvation, fast locked with faith for the key;
Make now for thyself expiation, and be thine atonement for thee.
Ah, thou that darkenest heaven — ah, thou that bringest a sword —
By the crimes of thine hands unforgiven they beseech thee to hear them, O Lord.
By the balefires of ages that burn for thine incense, by creed and by rood,
By the famine and passion that yearn and that hunger to find of thee food,
By the children that asked at thy throne of the priests that were fat with thine hire
For bread, and thou gavest a stone; for light, and thou madest them fire;
By the kiss of thy peace like a snake's kiss, that leaves the soul rotten at root;
By the savors of gibbets and stakes thou hast planted to bear to thee fruit;
By torture and terror and treason, that make to thee weapons and wings;
By thy power upon men for a season, made out of the malice of things;
O thou that hast built thee a shrine of the madness of man and his shame,
And hast hung in the midst for a sign of his worship the lamp of thy name;
That hast shown him for heaven in a vision a void world's shadow and shell,
And hast fed thy delight and derision with fire of belief as of hell;
That hast fleshed on the souls that believe thee the fang of the death-worm fear,
With anguish of dreams to deceive them whose faith cries out in thine ear;
By the face of the spirit confounded before thee humbled in dust,
By the dread wherewith life was astounded and shamed out of sense of its trust,
By the scourges of doubt and repentance that fell on the soul at thy nod,
Thou art judged, O judge, and the sentence is gone forth against thee, O God.
Thy slave that slept is awake; thy slave but slept for a span;
Yea, man thy slave shall unmake thee, who made thee lord over man.
For his face is set to the east, his feet on the past and its dead;
The sun rearisen is his priest, and the heat thereof hallows his head.
His eyes take part in the morning; his spirit outsounding the sea
Asks no more witness or warning from temple or tripod or tree.
He hath set the centuries at union; the night is afraid at his name;
Equal with life, in communion with death, he hath found them the same.
Past the wall unsurmounted that bars out our vision with iron and fire
He hath sent forth his soul for the stars to comply with and suns to conspire.
His thought takes flight for the center wherethrough it hath part in the whole;
The abysses forbid it not enter — the stars make room for the soul.
Space is the soul's to inherit; the night is hers as the day;
Lo, saith man, this is my spirit; how shall not the worlds make way?
Space is thought's, and the wonders thereof, and the secret of space;
Is thought not more than the thunders and lightnings? shall thought give place?
Is the body not more than the vesture, the life not more than the meat?
The will than the word or the gesture, the heart than the hands or the feet?

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85. **sing with the spheres.** The ancients believed that the stars made music as they revolved in their spheres. 99. **thou . . . sword.** Cf. *Matthew*, 10:34.—"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." 101. **balefires,** funeral pyres. **rood,** cross. 104. **bread . . . stone.** From Christ's Sermon on the Mount, *Matthew*, 7:9.—"What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?"

124. **tripod.** See note on *Hertha*, 64, page 697. **tree,** the cross. 135. **body . . . meat.** From Christ's Sermon on the Mount, *Matthew*, 6:25.—"Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

Is the tongue not more than the speech is? the head not more than the crown?
And if higher than is heaven be the reach of the soul, shall not heaven bow down?
Time, father of life, and more great than the life it begat and began,
Earth's keeper and heaven's and their fate, lives, thinks, and hath substance in man.
Time's motion that throbs in his blood is the thought that gives heart to the skies,
And the springs of the fire that is food to the sunbeams are light to his eyes.
The minutes that beat with his heart are the words to which worlds keep chime,
And the thought in his pulses is part of the blood and the spirit of time.
He saith to the ages, Give; and his soul forgoes not her share;
Who are ye that forbid him to live, and would feed him with heavenlier air?
Will ye feed him with poisonous dust, and restore him with hemlock for drink,
Till he yield you his soul up in trust, and have heart not to know or to think?
He hath stirred him, and found out the flaw in his fetters, and cast them behind;
His soul to his soul is a law, and his mind is a light to his mind.
The seal of his knowledge is sure, the truth and his spirit are wed;
Men perish, but man shall endure; lives die, but the life is not dead.
He hath sight of the secrets of season, the roots of the years and the fruits;
His soul is at one with the reason of things that is sap to the roots.
He can hear in their changes a sound as the conscience of consonant spheres;
He can see through the years flowing round him the law lying under the years.
Who are ye that would bind him with curses and blind him with vapor of prayer?
Your might is as night that disperses when light is alive in the air.
The bow of your godhead is broken, the arm of your conquest is stayed;
Though ye call down God to bear token, for fear of you none is afraid.
Will ye turn back times, and the courses of stars, and the season of souls?
Shall God's breath dry up the sources that feed time full as it rolls?
Nay, cry on him then till he show you a sign, till he lift up a rod;
Hath he made not the nations to know him of old if indeed he be God?
Is no heat of him left in the ashes of thousands burnt up for his sake?
Can prayer not rekindle the flashes that shone in his face from the stake?
Cry aloud; for your God is a God and a Savior; cry, make yourselves lean;
Is he drunk or asleep, that the rod of his wrath is unfelt and unseen?
Is the fire of his old loving-kindness gone out, that his pyres are acold?
Hath he gazed on himself unto blindness, who made men blind to behold?
Cry out, for his kingdom is shaken; cry out, for the people blaspheme;
Cry aloud till his godhead awaken; what doth he to sleep and to dream?
Cry, cut yourselves, gash you with knives and with scourges, heap on to you dust;
Is his life but as other gods' lives? is not this the Lord God of your trust?
Is not this the great God of your sires, that with souls and with bodies was fed,
And the world was on flame with his fires? O fools, he was God, and is dead.
He will hear not again the strong crying of earth in his ears as before,
And the fume of his multitudes dying shall flatter his nostrils no more.
By the spirit he ruled as his slave is he slain who was mighty to slay,
And the stone that is sealed on his grave he shall rise not and roll not away.
Yea, weep to him, lift up your hands; be your eyes as a fountain of tears;
Where he stood there is nothing that stands; if he call, there is no man that hears.
He hath doffed his king's raiment of lies now the wane of his kingdom is come;
Ears hath he, and hears not; and eyes, and he sees not; and mouth, and is dumb.
His red king's raiment is ripped from him naked, his staff broken down;
And the signs of his empire are stripped from him shuddering; and where is his crown?
And in vain by the wellsprings refrozen ye cry for the warmth of his sun —
O God, the Lord God of thy chosen, thy will in thy kingdom be done.
Kingdom and will hath he none in him left him, nor warmth in his breath;
Till his corpse be cast out of the sun will ye know not the truth of his death?
Surely, ye say, he is strong, though the times be against him and men;

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147. **hemlock**, a drug prepared from the leaves of the poisonous hemlock herb. 155. **consonant**, harmonious.

167ff. **Cry aloud**, etc. Taken from *I Kings*, 18:19-40, where Elijah rebukes and destroys the prophets of Baal.—"And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, 'Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.' And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them" (verses 27-28). 184. **Ears . . . dumb.** Cf. *Psalms*, 115:4-6.—"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not."

Yet a little, ye say, and how long, till he come to show judgment again?
Shall God then die as the beasts die? who is it hath broken his rod?
O God, Lord God of thy priests, rise up now and show thyself God.
They cry out, thine elect, thine aspirants to heavenward, whose faith is as flame;
O thou the Lord God of our tyrants, they call thee, their God, by thy name.
By thy name that in hell-fire was written, and burned at the point of thy sword,
Thou art smitten, thou God, thou art smitten, thy death is upon thee, O Lord.
And the love-song of earth as thou diest resounds through the wind of her wings—
Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things.

(1871)

## THE PILGRIMS

Who is your lady of love, O ye that pass
Singing? and is it for sorrow of that which was
  That ye sing sadly, or dream of what shall be?
    For gladly at once and sadly it seems ye sing.
— Our lady of love by you is unbeholden;
For hands she hath none, nor eyes, nor lips, nor golden
  Treasure of hair, nor face nor form; but we
    That love, we know her more fair than anything.

— Is she a queen, having great gifts to give?
— Yea, these: that whoso hath seen her shall not live
  Except he serve her sorrowing, with strange pain,
    Travail and bloodshedding and bitterer tears;
And when she bids die he shall surely die.
And he shall leave all things under the sky
  And go forth naked under sun and rain
    And work and wait and watch out all his years.

— Hath she on earth no place of habitation?
— Age to age calling, nation answering nation,
  Cries out, Where is she? and there is none to say;
    For if she be not in the spirit of men,
For if in the inward soul she hath no place,
In vain they cry unto her, seeking her face,
  In vain their mouths make much of her; for they
    Cry with vain tongues, till the heart lives again.

— O ye that follow, and have ye no repentance?
For on your brows is written a mortal sentence,
  An hieroglyph of sorrow, a fiery sign,
    That in your lives ye shall not pause or rest,
Nor have the sure sweet common love, nor keep
Friends and safe days, nor joy of life nor sleep.
  — These have we not, who have one thing, the divine
    Face and clear eyes of faith and fruitful breast.

— And ye shall die before your thrones be won.
— Yea, and the changed world and the liberal sun
  Shall move and shine without us, and we lie
    Dead; but if she too move on earth and live,
But if the old world with all the old irons rent
Laugh and give thanks, shall we be not content?
  Nay, we shall rather live, we shall not die,
    Life being so little and death so good to give.

  — And these men shall forget you. — Yea, but we
Shall be a part of the earth and the ancient sea,
  And heaven-high air august, and awful fire,
    And all things good; and no man's heart shall beat
But somewhat in it of our blood once shed
Shall quiver and quicken, as now in us the dead
  Blood of men slain and the old same life's desire
    Plants in their fiery footprints our fresh feet.

  — But ye that might be clothed with all things pleasant,
  Ye are foolish that put off the fair soft present,
  That clothe yourselves with the cold future air;
    When mother and father and tender sister and brother

Sympathy for mankind continually striving.

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200. **Glory . . . highest.** Cf. *Luke*, 2:14.—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

*The Pilgrims.* This poem pays tribute to the great spirits of the earth who in spite of hardship and death have dedicated themselves to the cause of humanity, the lady of love of line 1. It is in the form of a dialogue between those spirits and their fellowmen who live only for themselves.

41-42. **we . . . earth,** etc. Cf. Prelude to *Songs before Sunrise*, 31-40, page 693.

And the old live love that was shall be as ye,
Dust, and no fruit of loving life shall be.
— She shall be yet who is more than all these were,
Than sister or wife or father unto us or mother.

—Is this worth life, is this, to win for wages?
Lo, the dead mouths of the awful gray-grown ages,
The venerable, in the past that is their prison,
In the outer darkness, in the unopening grave,
Laugh, knowing how many as ye now say have said,
How many, and all are fallen, are fallen and dead;
Shall ye dead rise, and these dead have not risen?
— Not we but she, who is tender and swift to save.

— Are ye not weary and faint not by the way,
Seeing night by night devoured of day by day,
Seeing hour by hour consumed in sleepless fire?
Sleepless; and ye too, when shall ye too sleep?
— We are weary in heart and head, in hands and feet,
And surely more than all things sleep were sweet,
Than all things save the inexorable desire
Which whoso knoweth shall neither faint nor weep.

— Is this so sweet that one were fain to follow?
Is this so sure where all men's hopes are hollow,
Even this your dream, that by much tribulation
Ye shall make whole flawed hearts, and bowed necks straight?
— Nay, though our life were blind, our death were fruitless,
Not therefore were the whole world's high hope rootless;
But man to man, nation would turn to nation,
And the old life live, and the old great word be great.

— Pass on then and pass by us and let us be,
For what light think ye after life to see?
And if the world fare better will ye know?
And if man triumph who shall seek you and say?
— Enough of light is this for one life's span,
That all men born are mortal, but not man;
And we men bring death lives by night to sow,
That man may reap and eat and live by day. (1871)

## TO WALT WHITMAN IN AMERICA

Send but a song oversea for us,
Heart of their hearts who are free,
Heart of their singer, to be for us
More than our singing can be;
Ours, in the tempest at error,
With no light but the twilight of terror;
Send us a song oversea!

Sweet-smelling of pine-leaves and grasses,
And blown as a tree through and through
With the winds of the keen mountain-passes,
And tender as sun-smitten dew;
Sharp-tongued as the winter that shakes
The wastes of your limitless lakes,
Wide-eyed as the sea-line's blue.

O strong-winged soul with prophetic
Lips hot with the bloodbeats of song,
With tremor of heartstrings magnetic,
With thoughts as thunders in throng,
With consonant ardors of chords
That pierce men's souls as with swords
And hale them hearing along,

Make us, too, music, to be with us
As a word from a world's heart warm;
To sail the dark as a sea with us,
Full-sailed, outsinging the storm,
A song to put fire in our ears
Whose burning shall burn up tears,
Whose sign bid battle reform;

A note in the ranks of a clarion,
A word in the wind of cheer,
To consume as with lightning the carrion
That makes time foul for us here;
In the air that our dead things infest
A blast of the breath of the west,
Till east way as west way is clear.

Out of the sun beyond sunset,
From the evening whence morning shall be,
With the rollers in measureless onset,
With the van of the storming sea,

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56. **Than sister, etc.** Cf. *Luke*, 14:26.—"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sister, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

87. **bring . . . sow.** Cf. *1 Corinthians*, 15:36-38.—"That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain . . . But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body."

*To Walt Whitman in America.* See Critical Notes.

19. **consonant,** harmonious.

With the world-wide wind, with the breath
That breaks ships driven upon death,
With the passion of all things free,

With the sea-steeds footless and frantic,
White myriads for death to bestride
In the charge of the ruining Atlantic
Where deaths by regiments ride,
With clouds and clamors of waters,
With a long note shriller than slaughter's
On the furrowless fields world-wide,

With terror, with ardor and wonder,
With the soul of the season that wakes
When the weight of a whole year's thunder
In the tidestream of autumn breaks,
Let the flight of the wide-winged word
Come over, come in and be heard,
Take form and fire for our sakes.

For a continent bloodless with travail
Here toils and brawls as it can,
And the web of it who shall unravel
Of all that peer on the plan;
Would fain grow men, but they grow not,
And fain be free, but they know not
One name for freedom and man?

One name, not twain for division;
One thing, not twain, from the birth;
Spirit and substance and vision,
Worth more than worship is worth;
Unbeheld, unadored, undivined,
The cause, the center, the mind,
The secret and sense of the earth.

Here as a weakling in irons,
Here as a weanling in bands,
As a prey that the stake-net environs,
Our life that we looked for stands;
And the man-child naked and dear,
Democracy, turns on us here
Eyes trembling, with tremulous hands.

It sees not what season shall bring to it
Sweet fruit of its bitter desire;
Few voices it hears yet sing to it,
Few pulses of hearts reaspire;
Foresees not time, nor forehears
The noises of imminent years,
Earthquake, and thunder, and fire;

When crowned and weaponed and curbless
It shall walk, without helm or shield,
The bare burnt furrows and herbless
Of war's last flame-stricken field —
Till godlike, equal with time,
It stand in the sun sublime,
In the godhead of man revealed.

Round your people and over them
Light like raiment is drawn,
Close as a garment to cover them,
Wrought not of mail nor of lawn;
Here, with hope hardly to wear,
Naked nations and bare
Swim, sink, strike out for the dawn.

Chains are here, and a prison,
Kings, and subjects, and shame;
If the God upon you be arisen,
How should our songs be the same?
How, in confusion of change,
How shall we sing, in a strange
Land, songs praising his name?

God is buried and dead to us,
Even the spirit of earth,
Freedom; so have they said to us,
Some with mocking and mirth,
Some with heartbreak and tears;
And a God without eyes, without ears,
Who shall sing of him, dead in the birth?

The earth god Freedom, the lonely
Face lightening, the footprint unshod,
Not as one man crucified only,
Nor scourged with but one life's rod;
The soul that is substance of nations,
Reincarnate with fresh generations;
The great god Man, which is God.

But in weariest of years and obscurest
Doth it live not at heart of all things,
The one God and one spirit, a purest
Life, fed from unstanchable springs?
Within love, within hatred it is,
And its seed in the stripe as the kiss,
And in slaves is the germ, and in kings.

Freedom we call it, for holier
Name of the soul's there is none;
Surelier it labors, if slowlier,
Than the meters of star or of sun;
Slowlier than life into breath,
Surelier than time into death,
It moves till its labor be done —

Till the motion be done and the measure
Circling through season and clime,
Slumber and sorrow and pleasure,
Vision of virtue and crime;
Till consummate with conquering eyes,
A soul disembodied, it rise
From the body transfigured of time;

Till it rise and remain and take station
With the stars of the worlds that rejoice;

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73. **stake-net**, a fishing net usually set in shallow water, held in a vertical position by means of stakes.

115. **Not as one man**, etc. Swinburne means that others besides Christ have suffered martyrdom in the name of Freedom. 125. **the stripe**, the mark of the lash.

Till the voice of its heart's exultation
Be as theirs an invariable voice;
By no discord of evil estranged,
By no pause, by no breach in it changed,
By no clash in the chord of its choice.

It is one with the world's generations,
With the spirit, the star and the sod;
With the kingless and king-stricken nations,
With the cross, and the chain, and the rod;
The most high, the most secret, most lonely,
The earth-soul Freedom, that only
Lives, and that only is God.

(1871)

## COR CORDIUM

O heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of bloom,
O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire
Dead love, living and singing, cleft his tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty make clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea.

(1871)

## THE SONG OF THE STANDARD

Maiden most beautiful, mother most bountiful, lady of lands,
Queen and republican, crowned of the centuries whose years are thy sands,
See for thy sake what we bring to thee, Italy, here in our hands.

This is the banner thy gonfalon, fair in the front of thy fight,
Red from the hearts that were pierced for thee, white as thy mountains are white,
Green as the spring of thy soul everlasting, whose life-blood is light.

Take to thy bosom thy banner, a fair bird fit for the nest,
Feathered for flight into sunrise or sunset, for eastward or west,
Fledged for the flight everlasting, but held yet warm to thy breast.

Gather it close to thee, song-bird or storm-bearer, eagle or dove,
Lift it to sunward, a beacon beneath to the beacon above,
Green as our hope in it, white as our faith in it, red as our love.

Thunder and splendor of lightning are hid in the folds of it furled;
Who shall unroll it but thou, as thy bolt to be handled and hurled,
Out of whose lips is the honey, whose bosom the milk of the world?

Out of thine hands hast thou fed us with pasture of color and song;
Glory and beauty by birthright to thee as thy garments belong;
Out of thine hands thou shalt give us as surely deliverance from wrong.

Out of thine eyes thou hast shed on us love as a lamp in our night,
Wisdom a lodestar to ships, and remembrance a flame-colored light;
Out of thine eyes thou shalt show us as surely the sundawn of right.

Turn to us, speak to us, Italy, mother, but once and a word,
None shall not follow thee, none shall not serve thee, not one that has heard;
Twice hast thou spoken a message, and time is athirst for the third.

Kingdom and empire of peoples thou hadst, and thy lordship made one
North sea and south sea and east men and west men that look on the sun;
Spirit was in thee and counsel, when soul in the nations was none.

Banner and beacon thou wast to the centuries of storm-wind and foam,

---

*Cor Cordium.* The title means *Heart of Hearts.* These are the words inscribed upon Shelley's tomb in Rome; they were suggested by Leigh Hunt, Shelley's friend. See Watson's *Shelley's Centenary*, page 900.

*The Song of the Standard.* This poem is addressed to Italy with her flag of three colors—red, white, and green. Although the country had won its freedom and was set up as a limited monarchy under Victor Emmanuel, the first king of Italy (1861-78), Swinburne still cherished the idea of an Italian republic.

4. **gonfalon,** an ensign or standard hung from a crosspiece or frame instead of from a staff.

24. **Twice . . . message.** The first time (lines 25-27) was when Rome exercised sovereignty over the nations of the ancient world. The second (lines 28-30) was when Rome, through the Renaissance, saved Europe from the chaos of the Dark Ages.

Ages that clashed in the dark with each other, and years without home;
Empress and prophetess wast thou, and what wilt thou now be, O Rome?

Ah, by the faith and the hope and the love that have need of thee now,
Shines not thy face with the forethought of freedom, and burns not thy brow?
Who is against her but all men? and who is beside her but thou?

Art thou not better than all men? and where shall she turn but to thee?
Lo, not a breath, not a beam, not a beacon from midland to sea;
Freedom cries out for a sign among nations, and none will be free.

England in doubt of her, France in despair of her, all without heart —
Stand on her side in the vanward of ages, and strike on her part!
Strike but one stroke for the love of her love of thee, sweet that thou art!

Take in thy right hand thy banner, a strong staff fit for thine hand;
Forth at the light of it lifted shall foul things flock from the land;
Faster than stars from the sun shall they fly, being lighter than sand.

Green thing to green in the summer makes answer, and rose-tree to rose;
Lily by lily the year becomes perfect; and none of us knows
What thing is fairest of all things on earth as it brightens and blows.

This thing is fairest in all time of all things, in all time is best —
Freedom, that made thee, our mother, and suckled her sons at thy breast;
Take to thy bosom the nations, and there shall the world come to rest. (1871)

## "NON DOLET"

It does not hurt. She looked along the knife
Smiling, and watched the thick drops mix and run
Down the sheer blade; not that which had been done
Could hurt the sweet sense of the Roman wife,
But that which was to do yet ere the strife
Could end for each forever, and the sun;
Nor was the palm yet, nor was peace yet won,
While pain had power upon her husband's life.

It does not hurt, Italia. Thou art more
Than bride to bridegroom; how shalt thou not take
The gift love's blood has reddened for thy sake?
Was not thy lifeblood given for us before?
And if love's heartblood can avail thy need,
And thou not die, how should it hurt indeed? (1871)

## THE OBLATION

Ask nothing more of me, sweet;
All I can give you I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more,
More would be laid at your feet —
Love that should help you to live,
Song that should spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give,
Once to have sense of you more,
Touch you and taste of you, sweet,
Think you and breathe you and live,
Swept of your wings as they soar,
Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
Give you but love of you, sweet.
He that hath more, let him give;
He that hath wings, let him soar;
Mine is the heart at your feet
Here, that must love you to live.
(1871)

## From *TRISTRAM OF LYONESSE*

### PRELUDE: TRISTRAM AND ISEULT

Love, that is first and last of all things made,
The light that has the living world for shade,
The spirit that for temporal veil has on
The souls of all men woven in unison,
One fiery raiment with all lives inwrought
And lights of sunny and starry deed and thought,
And alway through new act and passion new
Shines the divine same body and beauty through,
The body spiritual of fire and light
That is to worldly noon as noon to night;

---

*"Non Dolet."* The title means *It Does Not Hurt.* When Pætus Cæcina, who was ordered by Claudius I, emperor of Rome (41-54 A.D.), to kill himself, hesitated to strike the blow, his wife Arria seized the dagger, plunged it into her own breast, and handed the bloody weapon to her husband, saying: "Pæte, non dolet." The incident is mentioned by Pliny, *Letter* 316, 6.

*The Oblation.* This poem is addressed to Liberty.
*Tristram of Lyonesse.* See Critical Notes.

Love, that is flesh upon the spirit of man
And spirit within the flesh whence breath began;
Love, that keeps all the choir of lives in chime;
Love, that is blood within the veins of time;
That wrought the whole world without stroke of hand,
Shaping the breadth of sea, the length of land,
And with the pulse and motion of his breath
Through the great heart of the earth strikes life and death,
The sweet twain chords that make the sweet tune live
Through day and night of things alternative,
Through silence and through sound of stress and strife,
And ebb and flow of dying death and life;
Love, that sounds loud or light in all men's ears,
Whence all men's eyes take fire from sparks of tears,
That binds on all men's feet or chains or wings;
Love, that is root and fruit of terrene things;
Love, that the whole world's waters shall not drown,
The whole world's fiery forces not burn down;
Love, that what time his own hands guard his head
The whole world's wrath and strength shall not strike dead;
Love, that if once his own hands make his grave
The whole world's pity and sorrow shall not save;
Love, that for very life shall not be sold,
Nor bought nor bound with iron nor with gold;
So strong that heaven, could love bid heaven farewell,
Would turn to fruitless and unflowering hell;
So sweet that hell, to hell could love be given,
Would turn to splendid and sonorous heaven;
Love that is fire within thee and light above,
And lives by grace of nothing but of love;
Through many and lovely thoughts and much desire
Led these twain to the life of tears and fire;
Through many and lovely days and much delight
Led these twain to the lifeless life of night.
  Yea, but what then? albeit all this were thus,
And soul smote soul and left it ruinous,
And love led love as eyeless men lead men,
Through chance by chance to deathward — ah, what then?
Hath love not likewise led them further yet,
Out through the years where memories rise and set,
Some large as suns, some moon-like warm and pale,
Some starry-sighted, some through clouds that sail
Seen as red flame through spectral float of fume,
Each with the blush of its own special bloom
On the fair face of its own colored light,
Distinguishable in all the host of night,
Divisible from all the radiant rest
And separable in splendor? Hath the best
Light of love's all, of all that burn and move,
A better heaven than heaven is? Hath not love
Made for all these their sweet particular air
To shine in, their own beams and names to bear,
Their ways to wander and their wards to keep,
Till story and song and glory and all things sleep?
Hath he not plucked from death of lovers dead
Their musical soft memories, and kept red
The rose of their remembrance in men's eyes,
The sunsets of their stories in his skies,
The blush of their dead blood in lips that speak
Of their dead lives, and in the listener's cheek
That trembles with the kindling pity lit
In gracious hearts for some sweet fever-fit,
A fiery pity enkindled of pure thought
By tales that make their honey out of naught,
The faithless faith that lives without belief
Its light life through, the griefless ghost of grief?
Yea, as warm night refashions the sear blood
In storm-struck petal or in sun-struck bud,
With tender hours and tempering dew to cure
The hunger and thirst of day's distemperature
And ravin of the dry discoloring hours,
Hath he not bid relume their flameless flowers
With summer fire and heat of lamping song,
And bid the short-lived things, long dead, live long,
And thought remake their wan funereal fames,
And the sweet shining signs of women's names
That mark the months out and the weeks anew
He moves in changeless change of seasons through
To fill the days up of his dateless year

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26. **terrene**, earthly. 42. **these twain**, Tristram and Iseult.

81. **ravin**, ravenous hunger. 83. **lamping**, lighting, illuminating. 89. **dateless year**, eternity.

Flame from Queen Helen to Queen Guenevere?
For first of all the sphery signs whereby
Love severs light from darkness, and most high,
In the white front of January there glows
The rose-red sign of Helen like a rose;
And gold-eyed as the shore-flower shelterless
Whereon the sharp-breathed sea blows bitterness,
A storm-star that the seafarers of love
Strain their wind-wearied eyes for glimpses of,
Shoots keen through February's gray frost and damp
The lamplike star of Hero for a lamp;
The star that Marlowe sang into our skies
With mouth of gold, and morning in his eyes;
And in clear March across the rough blue sea
The signal sapphire of Alcyone
Makes bright the blown brows of the wind-foot year;
And shining like a sunbeam-smitten tear
Full ere it fall, the fair next sign in sight
Burns opal-wise with April-colored light
When air is quick with song and rain and flame,
My birth-month star that in love's heaven hath name
Iseult, a light of blossom and beam and shower,
My singing sign that makes the song-tree flower;
Next like a pale and burning pearl beyond
The rose-white sphere of flower-named Rosamond
Signs the sweet head of Maytime; and for June
Flares like an angered and storm-reddening moon
Her signal sphere, whose Carthaginian pyre
Shadowed her traitor's flying sail with fire;
Next, glittering as the wine-bright jacinth-stone,
A star south-risen that first to music shone,
The keen girl-star of golden Juliet bears
Light northward to the month whose forehead wears
Her name for flower upon it, and his trees
Mix their deep English song with Veronese;
And like an awful sovereign chrysolite
Burning, the supreme fire that blinds the night,
The hot gold head of Venus kissed by Mars,
A sun-flower among small spheréd flowers of stars,
The light of Cleopatra fills and burns
The hollow of heaven whence ardent August yearns;
And fixed and shining as the sister-shed
Sweet tears for Phæthon disorbed and dead,
The pale bright autumn's amber-colored sphere,
That through September sees the saddening year
As love sees change through sorrow, hath to name
Francesca's; and the star that watches flame
The embers of the harvest overgone
Is Thisbe's, slain of love in Babylon,
Set in the golden girdle of sweet signs
A blood-bright ruby; last save one light shines
An eastern wonder of sphery chrysopras,
The star that made men mad, Angelica's;
And latest named and lordliest, with a sound
Of swords and harps in heaven that ring it round,
Last love-light and last love-song of the year's
Gleams like a glorious emerald Guenevere's.
These are the signs wherethrough the year sees move,
Full of the sun, the sun-god which is love,
A fiery body blood-red from the heart
Outward, with fire-white wings made wide apart,
That close not and unclose not, but upright

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90. **Flame.** The construction is: Hath he not bid . . . the sweet signs of women's names . . . flame from, etc. Supply *that* before line 88; it refers to *months* and *weeks*. **Queen Helen.** See note on *A Dream of Fair Women*, 85, page 32. **Queen Guenevere.** Her love for Lancelot is a central theme of Arthurian romance. See *Idylls of the King*, page 119, and Critical Notes. 91. **sphery signs,** the signs of the zodiac. Swinburne assigns a heroine to each sign. 100. **Hero,** a priestess of Aphrodite (Venus) in the city of Sestos, on the Hellespont; she was loved by Leander, who swam the Hellespont nightly to see her. Marlowe treated the theme in his *Hero and Leander*. 104. **Alcyone,** Halcyone, the daughter of Æolus, god of the winds. When Halcyone learned that her husband Ceyx was drowned, she threw herself into the sea and was changed into a kingfisher. 105. **wind-foot,** swiftly passing. 110. **My . . . star.** Swinburne was born in April. 111. **Iseult.** This Iseult was the wife of King Mark, of Cornwall. See Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult* and note, page 442. 114. **Rosamond.** See note on *A Dream of Fair Women*, 251, page 34. 117. **Her signal sphere.** After Dido, queen of Carthage, was deserted by Æneas, she ascended a funeral pyre and was burned. The story is told in Virgil's *Æneid*, Book 4.

121. **Juliet,** of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The scene of the drama is laid in Verona, Italy (line 124). 125. **chrysolite,** a yellowish or greenish crystal. 127. **Venus,** goddess of love. **Mars,** god of war. Venus and Mars stand for Cleopatra and Antony, 129. **Cleopatra.** See *A Dream of Fair Women*, 127 ff., page 32. 132. **Phæthon,** son of Phœbus Apollo, god of the sun. To prove his divine origin, Phæthon was permitted for one day to drive the chariot of the sun, but he lost control of the horses and fell into the river Eridanus. His sisters, the Heliades, lamenting his fate, were turned into poplar trees, and their tears, which continued to flow, became amber as they dropped into the stream. 136. **Francesca,** Francesca da Rimini (13th century). She fell in love with her husband's brother Paolo and both lovers were killed by the husband. 138. **Thisbe,** the beautiful girl loved by Pyramus, of Babylon. Arriving first at the appointed meeting place, Thisbe, frightened by a lion, fled and dropped her veil, which the lion besmeared with blood. Pyramus, thinking that Thisbe was devoured, slew himself, and Thisbe returning to the scene stabbed herself also. 141. **chrysopras,** an apple-green variety of quartz. 142. **Angelica,** the fickle lover of Orlando, one of the great heroes of medieval romance. Because she did not return his love, Orlando went mad.

Steered without wind by their own light and might
Sweep through the flameless fire of air that rings
From heaven to heaven with thunder of wheels and wings
And antiphones of motion-molded rime
Through spaces out of space and timeless time.
So shine above dead chance and conquered change
The spheréd signs, and leave without their range
Doubt and desire, and hope with fear for wife,
Pale pains, and pleasures long worn out of life.
Yea, even the shadows of them spiritless,
Through the dim door of sleep that seem to press,
Forms without form, a piteous people and blind,
Men and no men, whose lamentable kind
The shadow of death and shadow of life compel
Through semblances of heaven and false-faced hell,
Through dreams of light and dreams of darkness tost
On waves innavigable, are these so lost?
Shapes that wax pale and shift in swift strange wise,
Void faces with unspeculative eyes,
Dim things that gaze and glare, dead mouths that move,
Featureless heads discrowned of hate and love,
Mockeries and masks of motion and mute breath,
Leavings of life, the superflux of death —
If these things and no more than these things be
Left when man ends or changes, who can see?
Or who can say with what more subtle sense
Their subtler natures taste in air less dense
A life less thick and palpable than ours,
Warmed with faint fires and sweetened with dead flowers
And measured by low music? how time fares
In that wan time-forgotten world of theirs,
Their pale poor world too deep for sun or star
To live in, where the eyes of Helen are,
And hers who made as God's own eyes to shine
The eyes that met them of the Florentine,
Wherein the godhead thence transfigured lit
All time for all men with the shadow of it?
Ah, and these, too, felt on them as God's grace
The pity and glory of this man's breathing face;
For these, too, these my lovers, these my twain,
Saw Dante, saw God visible by pain,
With lips that thundered and with feet that trod
Before men's eyes incognizable God;
Saw love and wrath and light and night and fire
Live with one life and at one mouth respire,
And in one golden sound their whole soul heard
Sounding, one sweet immitigable word.
They have the night, who had like us the day;
We, whom day binds, shall have the night as they.
We, from the fetters of the light unbound,
Healed of our wound of living, shall sleep sound.
All gifts but one the jealous God may keep
From our soul's longing, one he cannot — sleep.
This, though he grudge all other grace to prayer,
This grace his closed hand cannot choose but spare.
This, though his ear be sealed to all that live,
Be it lightly given or loathly, God must give.
We, as the men whose name on earth is none,
We too shall surely pass out of the sun;
Out of the sound and eyeless light of things,
Wide as the stretch of life's time-wandering wings,
Wide as the naked world and shadowless,
And long-lived as the world's own weariness.
Us too, when all the fires of time are cold,
The heights shall hide us and the depths shall hold.
Us too, when all the tears of time are dry,
The night shall lighten from her tearless eye.
Blind is the day and eyeless all its light,
But the large unbewildered eye of night
Hath sense and speculation; and the sheer
Limitless length of lifeless life and clear,
The timeless space wherein the brief worlds move
Clothed with light life and fruitful with light love,
With hopes that threaten, and with fears that cease,
Past fear and hope, hath in it only peace.

---

155. **antiphones**, anthems or psalms sung alternately by parts of a choir. 185. **And hers**, a reference to Beatrice, loved by Dante, the Florentine. See note on *Dante at Verona*, 1, page 507.

191-2. **these . . . Saw Dante.** Tristram and Isolde are represented in the fifth canto of Dante's *Inferno* as sharing the fate of a multitude of guilty lovers. Dante sees them as they are tossed about in the dark air by the blasts of hell. 196. **respire**, breathe.

Yet of these lives inlaid with hopes and fears,
Spun fine as fire and jeweled thick with tears,
These lives made out of loves that long since were,
Lives wrought as ours of earth and burning air,
Fugitive flame, and water of secret springs,
And clothed with joys and sorrows as with wings,
Some yet are good, if aught be good, to save
Some while from washing wreck and wrecking wave.
Was such not theirs, the twain I take, and give
Out of my life to make their dead life live
Some days of mine, and blow my living breath
Between dead lips forgotten even of death?
So many and many of old have given my twain
Love and live song and honey-hearted pain,
Whose root is sweetness and whose fruit is sweet,
So many and with such joy have tracked their feet,
What should I do to follow? Yet I too,
I have the heart to follow, many or few
Be the feet gone before me; for the way,
Rose-red with remnant roses of the day
Westward, and eastward white with stars that break,
Between the green and foam is fair to take
For any sail the sea-wind steers for me
From morning into morning, sea to sea.

(*1869*; 1871)

## A VISION OF SPRING IN WINTER

O tender time that love thinks long to see,
Sweet foot of spring that with her footfall sows
Late snowlike flowery leavings of the snows,
Be not too long irresolute to be;
O mother-month, where have they hidden thee?
Out of the pale time of the flowerless rose
I reach my heart out toward the springtime lands,
I stretch my spirit forth to the fair hours,
The purplest of the prime;
I lean my soul down over them, with hands
Made wide to take the ghostly growths of flowers;
I send my love back to the lovely time.

Where has the greenwood hid thy gracious head?
Veiled with what visions while the gray world grieves,
Or muffled with what shadows of green leaves,
What warm intangible green shadows spread
To sweeten the sweet twilight for thy bed?
What sleep enchants thee? what delight deceives?
Where the deep dreamlike dew before the dawn
Feels not the fingers of the sunlight yet
Its silver web unweave,
Thy footless ghost on some unfooted lawn
Whose air the unrisen sunbeams fear to fret
Lives a ghost's life of daylong dawn and eve.

Sunrise it sees not, neither set of star,
Large nightfall, nor imperial plenilune,
Nor strong sweet shape of the full-breasted noon;
But where the silver-sandaled shadows are,
Too soft for arrows of the sun to mar,
Moves with the mild gait of an ungrown moon:
Hard overhead the half-lit crescent swims,
The tender-colored night draws hardly breath,
The light is listening;
They watch the dawn of slender-shapen limbs,
Virginal, born again of doubtful death,
Chill foster-father of the weanling spring.

As sweet desire of day before the day,
As dreams of love before the true love born,
From the outer edge of winter overworn
The ghost arisen of May before the May
Takes through dim air her unawakened way,
The gracious ghost of morning risen ere morn.
With little unblown breasts and child-eyed looks
Following, the very maid, the girl-child spring,
Lifts windward her bright brows,
Dips her light feet in warm and moving brooks,
And kindles with her own mouth's coloring
The fearful firstlings of the plumeless boughs.

---

239. **So many.** The love of Tristram and Iseult was a favorite theme of medieval romance. It was treated by Malory, by Tennyson, and by Arnold; also by Wagner in his opera *Tristan and Isolde* (1865).

*A Vision of Spring in Winter.* Swinburne had a very great love for spring. 5. **mother-month,** April, the month of Swinburne's birth.

26. **plenilune,** the time of full moon.

I seek thee sleeping, and awhile I see,
Fair face that art not, how thy maiden breath
Shall put at last the deadly days to death
And fill the fields and fire the woods with thee
And seaward hollows where my feet would be
When heaven shall hear the word that April saith
To change the cold heart of the weary time,
To stir and soften all the time to tears,
Tears joyfuller than mirth;
As even to May's clear height the young days climb
With feet not swifter than those fair first years
Whose flowers revive not with thy flowers on earth.

I would not bid thee, though I might, give back
One good thing youth has given and borne away;
I crave not any comfort of the day
That is not, nor on time's retrodden track
Would turn to meet the white-robed hours or black
That long since left me on their mortal way;
Nor light nor love that has been, nor the breath
That comes with morning from the sun to be
And sets light hope on fire;
No fruit, no flower thought once too fair for death,
No flower nor hour once fallen from life's green tree,
No leaf once plucked or once fulfilled desire.

The morning song beneath the stars that fled
With twilight through the moonless mountain air,
While youth with burning lips and wreathless hair
Sang toward the sun that was to crown his head,
Rising; the hopes that triumphed and fell dead,
The sweet swift eyes and songs of hours that were;
These may'st thou not give back forever; these,
As at the sea's heart all her wrecks lie waste,
Lie deeper than the sea;
But flowers thou may'st, and winds, and hours of ease,
And all its April to the world thou may'st
Give back, and half my April back to me.

(1875)

## A FORSAKEN GARDEN

true to life

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briars if a man make way,
He shall find no life, but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorns he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain.
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Wings but the note of a sea-bird's song;
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sear and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.

---

*A Forsaken Garden.* The scene of this poem is East Dene, on the Isle of Wight, where Swinburne spent much of his youth.

1. **coign**, corner, projection.

Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "look forth from the flowers to the sea;
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die — but we?"
And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end — but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again forever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left naught living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

(1876)

## A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

I hid my heart in a nest of roses,
Out of the sun's way, hidden apart;
In a softer bed than the soft white snow's is,
Under the roses I hid my heart.
Why would it sleep not? why should it start,
When never a leaf of the rose-tree stirred?
What made sleep flutter his wings and part?
Only the song of a secret bird.

Lie still, I said, for the wind's wing closes,
And mild leaves muffle the keen sun's dart;
Lie still, for the wind on the warm sea dozes,
And the wind is unquieter yet than thou art.
Does a thought in thee still as a thorn's wound smart?
Does the fang still fret thee of hope deferred?
What bids the lids of thy sleep dispart?
Only the song of a secret bird.

The green land's name that a charm encloses,
It never was writ in the traveler's chart,
And sweet on its trees as the fruit that grows is,
It never was sold in the merchant's mart.
The swallows of dreams through its dim fields dart,
And sleep's are the tunes in its tree-tops heard;
No hound's note wakens the wildwood hart,
Only the song of a secret bird.

*A Ballad of Dreamland.* This lyric is generally regarded as one of the best examples in English of the French *ballade*—a poem composed of three stanzas of eight or ten lines each and a concluding *envoi*. Each of the stanzas ends with the same refrain, and only three or four rimes are used in the entire poem.

### ENVOI

In the world of dreams I have chosen my part,
To sleep for a season and hear no word
Of true love's truth or of light love's art,
Only the song of a secret bird.

(1876)

## A LYKE-WAKE SONG

Fair of face, full of pride,
Sit ye down by a dead man's side.

Ye sang songs a' the day;
Sit down at night in the red worm's way.

Proud ye were a' day long;
Ye'll be but lean at evensong.

Ye had gowd kells on your hair;
Nae man kens what ye were.

Ye set scorn by the silken stuff;
Now the grave is clean enough.

Ye set scorn by the rubis ring;
Now the worm is a saft sweet thing.

Fine gold and blithe fair face,
Ye are come to a grimly place.

Gold hair and glad grey een,
Nae man kens if ye have been.

(1877)

## A JACOBITE'S FAREWELL

### 1716

There's nae mair lands to tyne, my dear,
And nae mair lives to gie;
Though a man think sair to live nae mair,
There's but one day to die.

For a' things come and a' days gane,
What needs ye rend your hair?
But kiss me till the morn's morrow,
Then I'll kiss ye nae mair.

O lands are lost and life's losing,
And what were they to gie?
Fu' mony a man gives all he can,
But nae man else gives ye.

Our king wons ower the sea's water,
And I in prison sair;
But I'll win out the morn's morrow,
And ye'll see me nae mair.

(1877)

## THE TYNESIDE WIDOW

There's mony a man loves land and life,
Loves life and land and fee;
And mony a man loves fair women,
But never a man loves me, my love,
But never a man loves me.

O weel and weel for a' lovers,
I wot weel may they be;
And weel and weel for a' fair maidens,
But aye mair woe for me, my love,
But aye mair woe for me.

O weel be wi' you, ye sma' flowers,
Ye flowers and every tree;
And weel be wi' you, a' birdies,
But teen and tears wi' me, my love,
But teen and tears wi' me.

O weel be yours, my three brethren,
And ever weel be ye,
Wi' deeds for doing and loves for wooing;
But never a love for me, my love,
But never a love for me.

And weel be yours, my seven sisters,
And good love-days to see,
And long life-days and true lovers;
But never a day for me, my love,
But never a day for me.

Good times wi' you, ye bauld riders,
By the hieland and the lee;
And by the leeland and by the hieland
It's weary times wi' me, my love,
It's weary times wi' me.

Good days wi' you, ye good sailors,
Sail in and out the sea;
And by the beaches and by the reaches
It's heavy days wi' me, my love,
It's heavy days wi' me.

I had his kiss upon my mouth,
His bairn upon my knee;
I would my soul and body were twain,

---

*A Lyke-Wake Song.* A lyke-wake is a watch over a dead body.

7. **gowd kells**, gold hair-nets.

*A Jacobite's Farewell.* See Macaulay's *Epitaph on a Jacobite* and note, page 10, and Aytoun's *The Old Scottish Cavalier*, page 388. The date 1716, linked with this poem, marked the end of the unsuccessful attempt to secure the English throne for James Stuart (1688-1766), known as the Old Pretender. He was the son of James II. Swinburne belonged to a family noted for its Jacobite sympathies, and he was proud of the sacrifices made by his ancestors for the cause of the Stuarts.

1. **to tyne**, to lose.

13. **wons**, dwells. The Pretender lived for a while in France.

*The Tyneside Widow.* The Tyne is a river in Northumberland; it was the scene of frequent border strife.

2. **fee**, money. 14. **teen**, sorrow, grief. 27. **hieland and the lee**, highland and the lowland. 33. **reaches**, extended portions of land or water.

And the bairn and the kiss wi' me, my love,
And the bairn and the kiss wi' me.

The bairn down in the mools, my dear,
O saft and saft lies she;
I would the mools were ower my head,
And the young bairn fast wi' me, my love,
And the young bairn fast wi' me.

The father under the faem, my dear,
O sound and sound sleeps he;
I would the faem were ower my face,
And the father lay by me, my love,
And the father lay by me.

I would the faem were ower my face,
Or the mools on my ee-bree;
And waking-time with a' lovers,
But sleeping-time wi' me, my love,
But sleeping-time wi' me.

I would the mools were meat in my mouth,
The saut faem in my ee;
And the land-worm and the water-worm
To feed fu' sweet on me, my love,
To feed fu' sweet on me.

My life is sealed with a seal of love,
And locked with love for a key;
And I lie wrang and I wake lang,
But ye tak' nae thought for me, my love,
But ye tak' nae thought for me.

We were weel fain of love, my dear,
O fain and fain were we;
It was weel with a' the weary world,
But O, sae weel wi' me, my love,
But O, sae weel wi' me.

We were nane ower mony to sleep, my dear,
I wot we were but three;
And never a bed in the weary world
For my bairn and my dear and me, my love,
For my bairn and my dear and me.

(1877)

## A BALLAD OF FRANÇOIS VILLON

### PRINCE OF ALL BALLAD-MAKERS

Bird of the bitter bright gray golden morn
Scarce risen upon the dusk of dolorous years,
First of us all and sweetest singer born
Whose far shrill note the world of new men hears
Cleave the cold shuddering shade as twilight clears;
When song new-born put off the old world's attire
And felt its tune on her changed lips expire,
Writ foremost on the roll of them that came
Fresh girt for service of the latter lyre,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name!

Alas the joy, the sorrow, and the scorn,
That clothed thy life with hopes and sins and fears,
And gave thee stones for bread and tares for corn
And plume-plucked gaol-birds for thy starveling peers
Till death clipped close their flight with shameful shears;
Till shifts came short and loves were hard to hire,
When lilt of song nor twitch of twangling wire
Could buy thee bread or kisses; when light fame
Spurned like a ball and haled through brake and briar,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name!

Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn!
Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick tears!
Poor perfect voice, most blithe when most forlorn,
That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers
Like joy-bells crossed with death-bells in our ears!
What far delight has cooled the fierce desire
That like some ravenous bird was strong to tire
On that frail flesh and soul consumed with flame,
But left more sweet than roses to respire,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name?

---

41. **mools,** molds, earth. 46. **faem,** foam of the sea. 52. **ee-bree,** eyebrow. 63. **I lie wrang,** I lie tortured on my bed.

*A Ballad of François Villon.* François Villon (1431-63?) was a French poet and vagabond, famous for his *ballades.* On the *ballade* form see note on *A Ballad of Dreamland,* page 713. See also Rossetti's *A Ballad of Dead Ladies* and note, page 524.

1. **golden morn,** the Renaissance, which succeeded the "dusk" of the Middle Ages.

6. **song new-born.** Villon is regarded as the first and one of the greatest of the French lyric poets of the modern school. His verse, characterized by polish, raciness, and intense subjectivity, had great influence. 13. **stones for bread.** See note on *Hymn of Man,* 104, page 701. **corn,** wheat. See note on *Dolores,* 438, page 686. 14. **gaol-birds . . . peers.** For a number of years Villon was the leader of a band of vagabonds and thieves that infested the streets of Paris. He was arrested and imprisoned several times for robbery. 16. **shifts came short,** his expedients for a livelihood were exhausted. 29. **respire,** breathe.

### ENVOI

Prince of sweet songs made out of tears and fire,
A harlot was thy nurse, a god thy sire;
Shame soiled thy song, and song assoiled thy shame.
But from thy feet now death has washed the mire,
Love reads out first at head of all our quire,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name. (1877)

## CHILD'S SONG

What is gold worth, say,
Worth for work or play,
Worth to keep or pay,
Hide or throw away,
Hope about or fear?
What is love worth, pray?
Worth a tear?

Golden on the mold
Lie the dead leaves rolled
Of the wet woods old,
Yellow leaves and cold,
Woods without a dove;
Gold is worth but gold;
Love's worth love. (1878)

## TRIADS

### I

The word of the sun to the sky,
The word of the wind to the sea,
The word of the moon to the night,
What may it be?

The sense of the flower to the fly,
The sense of the bird to the tree,
The sense of the cloud to the light,
Who can tell me?

The song of the fields to the kye,
The song of the lime to the bee,
The song of the depth to the height,
Who knows all three?

### 2

The message of April to May,
That May sends on into June
And June gives out to July
For birthday boon;

The delight of the dawn in the day,
The delight of the day in the noon,
The delight of a song in a sigh
That breaks the tune;

The secret of passing away,
The cast of the change of the moon,
None knows it with ear or with eye,
But all will soon.

### 3

The live wave's love for the shore,
The shore's for the wave as it dies,
The love of the thunder-fire
That sears the skies —

We shall know not though life wax hoar,
Till all life, spent into sighs,
Burn out as consumed with desire
Of death's strange eyes;

Till the secret be secret no more
In the light of one hour as it flies,
Be the hour as of suns that expire
Or suns that rise. (1878)

## THALASSIUS

Upon the flowery forefront of the year,
One wandering by the gray-green April sea
Found on a reach of shingle and shallower sand
Inlaid with starrier glimmering jewelry
Left for the sun's love and the light wind's cheer
Along the foam-flowered strand,
Breeze-brightened, something nearer sea than land
Though the last shoreward blossom-fringe was near,
A babe asleep with flower-soft face that gleamed
To sun and seaward as it laughed and dreamed,
Too sure of either love for either's fear,
Albeit so birdlike slight and light, it seemed
Nor man nor mortal child of man, but fair
As even its twin-born tenderer spray-flowers were,
That the wind scatters like an Oread's hair.

For when July strewed fire on earth and sea
The last time ere that year,

---

32. **harlot . . . sire.** Many poets have sprung from humble origins, but few have shown so startling a combination of artistic fineness and baseness of life.
*Triads.* A triad is a group of three things closely related.
9. **kye**, cows.

*Thalassius.* The title means *From the Sea* and refers to the origin of the child, the central figure in the poem. *Thalassius* is intimately autobiographical. It portrays the early influences that shaped the life of Swinburne and traces the progress of his spiritual development. Cf. the Prelude to *Songs before Sunrise*, page 693. See Critical Notes.
3. **shingle**, stony seashore. 15. **Oread's hair.** The Oreads were mountain nymphs.

Out of the flame of morn Cymothoë,
Beheld one brighter than the sunbright sphere
Move toward her from its fieriest heart, whence trod
The live sun's very god,
Across the foam-bright waterways that are
As heavenlier heavens with star for answering star,
And on her eyes and hair and maiden mouth
Felt a kiss falling fierier than the South,
And heard above afar
A noise of songs and wind-enamored wings
And lutes and lyres of milder and mightier strings,
And round the resonant radiance of his car
Where depth is one with height,
Light heard as music, music seen as light,
And with that second moondawn of the spring's
That fosters the first rose,
A sun-child whiter than the sunlit snows
Was born out of the world of sunless things
That round the round earth flows and ebbs and flows.

But he that found the sea-flower by the sea
And took to foster like a graft of earth
Was born of man's most highest and heavenliest birth,
Free-born as winds and stars and waves are free;
A warrior gray with glories more than years,
Though more of years than change the quick to dead
Had rained their light and darkness on his head;
A singer that in time's and memory's ears
Should leave such words to sing as all his peers
Might praise with hallowing heat of rapturous tears
Till all the days of human flight were fled.
And at his knees his fosterling was fed
Not with man's wine and bread
Nor mortal mother-milk of hopes and fears,
But food of deep memorial days long sped;
For bread with wisdom and with song for wine
Clear as the full calm's emerald hyaline.
And from his grave glad lips the boy would gather
Fine honey of song-notes goldener than gold,
More sweet than bees make of the breathing heather,
That he, as glad and bold,
Might drink as they, and keep his spirit from cold.
And the boy loved his laurel-laden hair
As his own father's risen on the eastern air,
And that less white brow-binding bayleaf bloom
More than all flowers his father's eyes relume;
And those high songs he heard,
More than all notes of any landward bird,
More than all sounds less free
Than the wind's quiring to the choral sea.

High things the high song taught him—how the breath
Too frail for life may be more strong than death;
And this poor flash of sense in life, that gleams
As a ghost's glory in dreams,
More stable than the world's own heart's root seems,
By that strong faith of lordliest love which gives
To death's own sightless-seeming eyes a light
Clearer, to death's bare bones a verier might,
Than shines or strikes from any man that lives.
How he that loves life overmuch shall die
The dog's death, utterly:
And he that much less loves it than he hates
All wrongdoing that is done
Anywhere always underneath the sun
Shall live a mightier life than time's or fate's.
One fairer thing he shewed him, and in might
More strong than day and night
Whose strengths build up time's towering period:
Yea, one thing stronger and more high than God,
Which if man had not, then should God not be:
And that was Liberty.
And gladly should man die to gain, he said,
Freedom; and gladlier, having lost, lie dead.
For man's earth was not, nor the sweet sea-waves
His, nor his own land, nor its very graves,
Except they bred not, bore not, hid not slaves:
But all of all that is,
Were one man free in body and soul, were his.

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18. **Cymothoë,** a sea nymph. 21. **sun's very god,** Phœbus Apollo. 37. **he that found,** etc. This has been identified as Landor. See *In Memory of Walter Savage Landor*, page 681. 53. **hyaline,** a poetic term for the sea or for clear atmosphere.

59. **laurel-laden,** crowned with the poet's laurel-wreath of honor. 61. **bayleaf,** myrtle, used in crowning poets. 76. **he that . . . die.** Cf. *Matthew*, 16:25.—"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." 88-89. **gladly . . . lie dead,** a free translation of the Latin inscription written by Landor for the Spanish patriots who died resisting the invasion of Napoleon in the campaign of 1811-12.

And the song softened, even as heaven by night
Softens, from sunnier down to starrier light,
And with its moonbright breath
Blessed life for death's sake, and for life's sake death,
Till as the moon's own beam and breath confuse,
In one clear hueless haze of glimmering hues,
The sea's line and the land's line and the sky's,
And light for love of darkness almost dies,
As darkness only lives for light's dear love,
Whose hands the web of night is woven of;
So in that heaven of wondrous words were life
And death brought out of strife;
Yea, by that strong spell of serene increase
Brought out of strife to peace.

And the song lightened, as the wind at morn
Flashes, and even with lightning of the wind
Night's thick-spun web is thinned
And all its weft unwoven and overworn
Shrinks, as might love from scorn,
And as when wind and light on water and land
Leap as twin gods from heavenward hand in hand,
And with the sound and splendor of their leap
Strike darkness dead, and daunt the spirit of sleep,
And burn it up with fire;
So with the light that lightened from the lyre
Was all the bright heat in the child's heart stirred
And blown with blasts of music into flame
Till even his sense became
Fire, as the sense that fires the singing bird
Whose song calls night by name.
And in the soul within the sense began
The manlike passion of a godlike man,
And in the sense within the soul again
Thoughts that make men of gods and gods of men.

For love the high song taught him—love that turns
God's heart toward man as man's to Godward; love
That life and death and life are fashioned of,
From the first breath that burns
Half-kindled on the flowerlike yeanling's lip,
So light and faint that life seems like to slip,
To that yet weaklier drawn
When sunset dies of night's devouring dawn.
But the man dying not wholly as all men dies
If aught be left of his in live men's eyes
Out of the dawnless dark of death to rise;
If aught of deed or word
Be seen for all time or of all time heard.
Love, that though body and soul were overthrown
Should live for love's sake of itself alone,
Though spirit and flesh were one thing doomed and dead,
Not wholly annihilated.
Seeing even the hoariest ash-flake that the pyre
Drops, and forgets the thing was once afire
And gave its heart to feed the pile's full flame
Till its own heart its own heat overcame,
Outlives its own life, though by scarce a span,
As such men dying outlive themselves in man,
Outlive themselves forever; if the heat
Outburn the heart that kindled it, the sweet
Outlast the flower whose soul it was, and flit
Forth of the body of it
Into some new shape of a strange perfume
More potent than its light live spirit of bloom,
How shall not something of that soul relive,
That only soul that had such gifts to give
As lighten something even of all men's doom,
Even from the laboring womb,
Even to the seal set on the unopening tomb?
And these the loving light of song and love
Shall wrap and lap round and impend above,
Imperishable; and all springs born illume
Their sleep with brighter thoughts than wake the dove
To music, when the hillside winds resume
The marriage-song of heather-flower and broom
And all the joy thereof.

And hate the song too taught him—hate of all
That brings or holds in thrall
Of spirit or flesh, free-born ere God began,
The holy body and sacred soul of man.
And wheresoever a curse was or a chain,
A throne for torment or a crown for bane
Rose, molded out of poor men's molten pain,
There, said he, should man's heaviest hate be set
Inexorably, to faint not or forget
Till the last warmth bled forth of the last vein
In flesh that none should call a king's again,
Seeing wolves and dogs and birds that plague-strike air
Leave the last bone of all the carrion bare.

And hope the high song taught him—hope whose eyes
Can sound the seas unsoundable, the skies
Inaccessible of eyesight; that can see

What earth beholds not, hear what wind and sea
Hear not, and speak what all these crying in one
Can speak not to the sun.
For in her sovereign eyelight all things are
Clear as the closest seen and kindlier star
That marries morn and even and winter and spring
With one love's golden ring.
For she can see the days of man, the birth
Of good and death of evil things on earth
Inevitable and infinite, and sure
As present pain is, or herself is pure.
Yea, she can hear and see, beyond all things
That lighten from before Time's thunderous wings
Through the awful circle of wheel-winged periods,
The tempest of the twilight of all gods;
And higher than all the circling course they ran
The sundawn of the spirit that was man.

And fear the song too taught him—fear to be
Worthless the dear love of the wind and sea
That bred him fearless, like a sea-mew reared
In rocks of man's foot feared,
Where naught of wingless life may sing or shine.
Fear to wax worthless of that heaven he had
When all the life in all his limbs was glad,
And all the drops in all his veins were wine,
And all the pulses music; when his heart,
Singing, bade heaven and wind and sea bear part
In one live song's reiterance, and they bore;
Fear to go crownless of the flower he wore
When the winds loved him and the waters knew,
The blithest life that clove their blithe life through
With living limbs exultant, or held strife
More amorous than all dalliance aye anew
With the bright breath and strength of their large life,
With all strong wrath of all sheer winds that blew,
All glories of all storms of the air that fell
Prone, ineluctable,
With roar from heaven of revel, and with hue
As of a heaven turned hell.
For when the red blast of their breath had made
All heaven aflush with light more dire than shade,
He felt it in his blood and eyes and hair
Burn as if all the fires of the earth and air
Had laid strong hold upon his flesh, and stung
The soul behind it as with serpent's tongue,
Forked like the loveliest lightnings; nor could bear
But hardly, half distraught with strong delight,
The joy that like a garment wrapped him round
And lapped him over and under
With raiment of great light
And rapture of great sound
At every loud leap earthward of the thunder
From heaven's most furthest bound;
So seemed all heaven in hearing and in sight,
Alive and mad with glory and angry joy,
That something of its marvelous mirth and might
Moved even to madness, fledged as even for flight,
The blood and spirit of one but mortal boy.

So, clothed with love and fear that love makes great,
And armed with hope and hate,
He set first foot upon the spring-flowered ways
That all feet pass and praise.
And one dim dawn between the winter and spring,
In the sharp harsh wind harrying heaven and earth
To put back April that had borne his birth
From sunward on her sunniest shower-struck wing,
With tears and laughter for the dew-dropped thing,
Slight as indeed a dew-drop, by the sea
One met him lovelier than all men may be,
God-featured, with god's eyes; and in their might
Somewhat that drew men's own to mar their sight,
Even of all eyes drawn toward him; and his mouth
Was as the very rose of all men's youth,
One rose of all the rose-beds in the world.
Bur round his brows the curls were snakes that curled,
And like his tongue a serpent's; and his voice
Speaks death, and bids rejoice.
Yet then he spake no word, seeming as dumb,
A dumb thing mild and hurtless; nor at first
From his bowed eyes seemed any light to come,
Nor his meek lips for blood or tears to thirst;
But as one blind and mute in mild sweet wise
Pleading for pity of piteous lips and eyes,
He strayed with faint bare lily-lovely feet
Helpless, and flowerlike sweet;

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205. **like a sea-mew.** Swinburne frequently compares himself to a sea-mew. 222. **ineluctable,** inescapable.

Nor might man see, not having word hereof,
That this of all gods was the great god Love.

And seeing him lovely and like a little child
That wellnigh wept for wonder that it smiled
And was so feeble and fearful, with soft speech
The youth bespake him softly; but there fell
From the sweet lips no sweet word audible
That ear or thought might reach—
No sound to make the dim cold silence glad,
No breath to thaw the hard harsh air with heat;
Only the saddest smile of all things sweet,
Only the sweetest smile of all things sad.

And so they went together one green way
Till April dying made free the world for May;
And on his guide suddenly Love's face turned,
And in his blind eyes burned
Hard light and heat of laughter; and like flame
That opens in a mountain's ravening mouth
To blear and sear the sunlight from the south,
His mute mouth opened, and his first word came:
"Knowest thou me now by name?"
And all his stature waxed immeasurable,
As of one shadowing heaven and lightening hell;
And statelier stood he than a tower that stands
And darkens with its darkness far-off sands
Whereon the sky leans red;
And with a voice that stilled the winds he said:
"I am he that was thy lord before thy birth,
I am he that is thy lord till thou turn earth;
I make the night more dark, and all the morrow
Dark as the night whose darkness was my breath.
O fool, my name is sorrow;
Thou fool, my name is death."

And he that heard spake not, and looked right on
Again, and Love was gone.

Through many a night toward many a wearier day
His spirit bore his body down its way.
Through many a day toward many a wearier night
His soul sustained his sorrows in her sight.
And earth was bitter, and heaven, and even the sea
Sorrowful even as he.
And the wind helped not, and the sun was dumb;
And with too long stress of grief to be
His heart grew sear and numb.

And one bright even ere summer in autumn sank
At stardawn standing on a gray sea-bank,
He felt the wind fitfully shift and heave
As toward a stormier eve;
And all the wan wide sea shuddered; and earth
Shook underfoot as toward some timeless birth,
Intolerable and inevitable; and all
Heaven, darkling, trembled like a stricken thrall.
And far out of the quivering east, and far
From past the moonrise and its guiding star,
Began a noise of tempest and a light
That was not of the lightning; and a sound
Rang with it round and round
That was not of the thunder; and a flight
As of blown clouds by night,
That was not of them; and with songs and cries
That sang and shrieked their soul out at the skies
A shapeless earthly storm of shapes began
From all ways round to move in on the man,
Clamorous against him silent; and their feet
Were as the wind's are fleet,
And their shrill songs were as wild birds' are sweet.

And as when all the world of earth was wronged
And all the host of all men driven afoam
By the red hand of Rome,
Round some fierce amphitheater overthronged
With fair clear faces full of bloodier lust
Than swells and stings the tiger when his mood
Is fieriest after blood
And drunk with trampling of the murderous must
That soaks and stains the tortuous close-coiled wood
Made monstrous with its myriad-mustering brood,
Face by fair face panted and gleamed and pressed,
And breast by passionate breast

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281-82. **Only the saddest . . . sad.** With these lines compare Shelley's *To a Skylark*, 90.—"Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

339. **red hand of Rome, etc.,** a reference to the Roman revels under Nero. Cf. *Dolores*, 225-256, page 684. 344. **must,** decayed vegetation of the forest. 346. **myriad-mustering brood,** life on the floor of the jungle.

Heaved hot with ravenous rapture, as they quaffed
The red ripe full fume of the deep live draft,
The sharp quick reek of keen fresh bloodshed, blown
Through the dense deep drift up to the emperor's throne
From the under steaming sands
With clamor of all-applausive throats and hands,
Mingling in mirthful time
With shrill blithe mockeries of the lithe-limbed mime:
So from somewhence far forth of the unbeholden,
Dreadfully driven from over and after and under,
Fierce, blown through fifes of brazen blast and golden,
With sound of chiming waves that drown the thunder
Or thunder that strikes dumb the sea's own chimes,
Began the bellowing of the bull-voiced mimes,
Terrible; firs bowed down as briars or palms
Even at the breathless blast as of a breeze
Fulfilled with clamor and clangor and storms of psalms;
Red hands rent up the roots of old-world trees,
Thick flames of torches tossed as tumbling seas
Made mad the moonless and infuriate air
That, ravening, reveled in the riotous hair
And raiment of the furred Bassarides.

So came all those in on him; and his heart,
As out of sleep suddenly struck astart,
Danced, and his flesh took fire of theirs, and grief
Was as a last year's leaf
Blown dead far down the wind's way; and he set
His pale mouth to the brightest mouth it met
That laughed for love against his lips, and bade
Follow; and in following all his blood grew glad
And as again a sea-bird's; for the wind—
Took him to bathe him deep round breast and brow
Not as it takes a dead leaf drained and thinned,
But as the brightest bay-flower blown on bough,
Set springing toward it singing; and they rode
By many a vine-leaved, many a rose-hung road,
Exalt with exultation; many a night
Set all its stars upon them as for spies
On many a moon-bewildering mountain-height
Where he rode only by the fierier light
Of his dread lady's hot sweet hungering eyes.
For the moon wandered witless of her way,
Spell-stricken by strong magic in such wise
As wizards use to set the stars astray.
And in his ears the music that makes mad
Beat always; and what way the music bade,
That alway rode he; nor was any sleep
His, nor from height nor deep.
But heaven was as red iron, slumberless,
And had no heart to bless;
And earth lay sear and darkling as distraught,
And help in her was naught.

Then many a midnight, many a morn and even,
His mother, passing forth of her fair heaven,
With goodlier gifts than all save gods can give
From earth or from the heaven where sea-things live,
With shine of sea-flowers through the bay-leaf braid
Woven for a crown her foam-white hands had made
To crown him with land's laurel and sea-dew,
Sought the sea-bird that was her boy; but he
Sat panther-throned beside Erigone,
Riding the red ways of the revel through
Midmost of pale-mouthed passion's crownless crew.
Till on some winter'd dawn of some dim year
He let the vine-bit on the panther's lip
Slide, and the green rein slip,
And set his eyes to seaward, nor gave ear
If sound from landward hailed him, dire or dear;
And passing forth of all those fair fierce ranks
Back to the gray sea-banks,
Against a sea-rock lying, aslant the steep,
Fell after many sleepless dreams on sleep.

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356. **mime,** an actor in the ancient mime, a kind of drama in which scenes from life were imitated and generally represented in a ridiculous manner. 370. **furred Bassarides,** devotees of Bacchus, god of wine. They were noted for their wild orgies, which included sacrifices of animals, eaten raw by the participants. They wore garments made of fur. 373. **flesh . . . theirs.** This symbolizes the mood in which Swinburne wrote the poems in the first series of *Poems and Ballads.* Poems on pages 662-689 of this volume were included in *Poems and Ballads.*

409. **panther-throned beside Erigone.** Erigone was the daughter of Icarius, who was taught by Dionysus (god of wine) the culture of the grape. He gave wine to some shepherds who, thinking it poison, killed him. Overcome with grief, Erigone took her own life. She was later placed by Zeus among the stars as the constellation Virgo (Virgin). The panther was sacred to Dionysus.

And in his sleep the dun green light was shed
Heavily round his head
That through the veil of sea falls fathom-deep,
Blurred like a lamp's that when the night drops dead
Dies; and his eyes gat grace of sleep to see
The deep divine dark dayshine of the sea,
Dense water-walls and clear dusk waterways,
Broad-based, or branching as a sea-flower sprays
That side or this dividing; and anew
The glory of all her glories that he knew.
And in sharp rapture of recovering tears
He woke on fire with yearnings of old years,
Pure as one purged of pain that passion bore,
Ill child of bitter mother; for his own
Looked laughing toward him from her midsea throne,
Up toward him there ashore.

Thence in his heart the great same joy began,
Of child that made him man;
And turned again from all hearts else on quest,
He communed with his own heart, and had rest.
And like sea-winds upon loud waters ran
His days and dreams together, till the joy
Burned in him of the boy.
Till the earth's great comfort and the sweet sea's breath
Breathed and blew life in where was heartless death,
Death spirit-stricken of soul-sick days, where strife
Of thought and flesh made mock of death and life.
And grace returned upon him of his birth
Where heaven was mixed with heavenlike sea and earth;
And song shot forth strong wings that took the sun
From inward, fledged with might of sorrow and mirth
And father's fire made mortal in his son.
Nor was not spirit of strength in blast and breeze
To exalt again the sun's child and the sea's;
For as wild mares in Thessaly grow great
With child of ravishing winds, that violate
Their leaping length of limb with manes like fire
And eyes outburning heaven's
With fires more violent than the lightning levin's
And breath drained out and desperate of desire,
Even so the spirit in him, when winds grew strong,
Grew great with child of song.
Nor less than when his veins first leapt for joy
To draw delight in such as burns a boy,
Now too the soul of all his senses felt
The passionate pride of deep sea-pulses dealt
Through nerve and jubilant vein
As from the love and largess of old time,
And with his heart again
The tidal throb of all the tides keep rime
And charm him from his own soul's separate sense
With infinite and invasive influence
That made strength sweet in him and sweetness strong,
Being now no more a singer, but a song.

Till one clear day when brighter sea-wind blew
And louder sea-shine lightened, for the waves
Were full of godhead and the light that saves,
His father's, and their spirit had pierced him through,
He felt strange breath and light all round him shed
That bowed him down with rapture; and he knew
His father's hand, hallowing his humbled head,
And the old great voice of the old good time, that said:

"Child of my sunlight and the sea, from birth
A fosterling and fugitive on earth;
Sleepless of soul as wind or wave or fire,
A manchild with an ungrown god's desire;
Because thou hast loved naught mortal more than me,
Thy father, and thy mother-hearted sea;
Because thou hast set thine heart to sing, and sold
Life and life's love for song, God's living gold;
Because thou hast given thy flower and fire of youth
To feed men's hearts with visions, truer than truth;

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455-460. **wild mares in Thessaly, etc.** Boreas, god of the wind, becoming enamored of some beautiful mares on the plain of Thessaly, took on the form of an azure-maned steed and became the sire of twelve female foals. The incident is related in the *Iliad*, 20, 223 ff., in Virgil's *Georgics*, 3, 275 ff.

459. **levin's,** flash's. 472. **invasive,** penetrating. 478. **father's,** Apollo's. Apollo was god of the sun, of music, and of poetry. Swinburne represents himself as born of Apollo and the sea nymph Cymothoë. See lines 16-36. 483ff. **Child of my sunlight, etc.** The concluding lines of the poem are spoken by Apollo.

Because thou hast kept in those world-wandering eyes
The light that makes me music of the skies;
Because thou hast heard with world-unwearied ears
The music that puts light into the spheres;
Have therefore in thine heart and in thy mouth
The sound of song that mingles north and south,
The song of all the winds that sing of me,
And in thy soul the sense of all the sea."

(1880)

## From BY THE NORTH SEA

### I

A land that is lonelier than ruin;
A sea that is stranger than death;
Far fields that a rose never blew in,
Wan waste where the winds lack breath;
Waste endless and boundless, and flowerless
But of marsh-blossoms fruitless as free;
Where earth lies exhausted, as powerless
To strive with the sea.

Far flickers the flight of the swallows,
Far flutters the weft of the grass
Spun dense over desolate hollows,
More pale than the clouds as they pass;
Thick woven as the weft of a witch is
Round the heart of a thrall that hath sinned,
Whose youth and the wrecks of its riches
Are waifs on the wind.

The pastures are herdless and sheepless,
No pasture or shelter for herds.
The wind is relentless and sleepless,
And restless and songless the birds;
Their cries from afar fall breathless,
Their wings are as lightnings that flee;
For the land has two lords that are deathless—
Death's self, and the sea.

These twain, as a king with his fellow,
Hold converse of desolate speech;
And her waters are haggard and yellow
And crass with the scurf of the beach;
And his garments are gray as the hoary
Wan sky where the day lies dim;
And his power is to her, and his glory,
As hers unto him.

In the pride of his power she rejoices,
In her glory he glows and is glad;
In her darkness the sound of his voice is,
With his breath she dilates and is mad.
"If thou slay me, O death, and outlive me,
Yet thy love hath fulfilled me of thee."
"Shall I give thee not back if thou give me,
O sister, O sea?"

And year upon year dawns living,
And age upon age drops dead;
And his hand is not weary of giving,
And the thirst of her heart is not fed;
And the hunger that moans in her passion,
And the rage in her hunger that roars,
As a wolf's that the winter lays lash on,
Still calls and implores.

Her walls have no granite for girder,
No fortalice fronting her stands;
But reefs the bloodguiltiest of murder
Are less than the banks of her sands.
These number their slain by the thousand;
For the ship hath no surety to be,
When the bank is abreast of her bows and
Aflush with the sea.

No surety to stand, and no shelter
To dawn out of darkness but one,
Out of waters that hurtle and welter
No succor to dawn with the sun,
But a rest from the wind as it passes,
Where, hardly redeemed from the waves,
Lie thick as the blades of the grasses
The dead in their graves.

A multitude noteless of numbers,
As wild weeds cast on an heap;
And sounder than sleep are their slumbers,
And softer than song is their sleep;
And sweeter than all things and stranger
The sense, if perchance it may be,
That the wind is divested of danger
And scatheless the sea;

That the roar of the banks they breasted
Is hurtless as bellowing of herds,
And the strength of his wings that invested
The wind, as the strength of a bird's;
As the sea-mew's might or the swallow's
That cry to him back if he cries,
As over the graves and their hollows
Days darken and rise.

As the souls of the dead men disburdened
And clean of the sins that they sinned,
With a lovelier than man's life guerdoned
And delight as a wave's in the wind,
And delight as the wind's in the billow,

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496. **music . . . spheres.** The ancients believed that the stars made music as they revolved in their spheres.

*By the North Sea.* See Critical Notes.

10. **weft of the grass,** gossamer, or cobwebs, seen on the grass, especially in autumn.

50. **fortalice,** a small fort. 62. **hardly,** with difficulty. 83. **guerdoned,** rewarded.

Birds pass, and deride with their glee
The flesh that has dust for its pillow
As wrecks have the sea.

When the ways of the sun wax dimmer,
Wings flash through the dusk like beams;
As the clouds in the lit sky glimmer,
The bird in the graveyard gleams;
As the cloud at its wing's edge whitens
When the clarions of sunrise are heard,
The graves that the bird's note brightens
Grow bright for the bird.

As the waves of the numberless waters
That the wind cannot number who guides
Are the sons of the shore and the daughters
Here lulled by the chime of the tides;
And here in the press of them standing,
We know not if these or if we
Live truliest, or anchored to landing
Or drifted to sea.

In the valley he named of decision,
No denser were multitudes met
When the soul of the seer in her vision
Saw nations for doom of them set;
Saw darkness in dawn, and the splendor
Of judgment, the sword and the rod;
But the doom here of death is more tender
And gentler the god.

And gentler the wind from the dreary
Sea-banks by the waves overlapped,
Being weary, speaks peace to the weary,
From slopes that the tide-stream hath sapped;
And sweeter than all that we call so
The seal of their slumber shall be
Till the graves that embosom them also
Be sapped of the sea.
(1880)

### 7

But afar on the headland exalted,
But beyond in the curl of the bay,
From the depth of his dome deep-vaulted,
Our father is lord of the day —
Our father and lord that we follow,
For deathless and ageless is he;
And his robe is the whole sky's hollow,
His sandal the sea.

Where the horn of the headland is sharper,
And her green floor glitters with fire,
The sea has the sun for a harper,
The sun has the sea for a lyre.
The waves are a pavement of amber,
By the feet of the sea-winds trod
To receive in a god's presence-chamber
Our father, the god.

Time, haggard and changeful and hoary,
Is master and god of the land;
But the air is fulfilled of the glory
That is shed from our lord's right hand.
O father of all of us ever,
All glory be only to thee
From heaven, that is void of thee never,
And earth, and the sea.

O Sun, whereof all is beholden,
Behold now the shadow of this death,
This place of the sepulchers, olden
And emptied and vain as a breath.
The bloom of the bountiful heather
Laughs broadly beyond in thy light
As dawn, with her glories to gather,
At darkness and night.

Though the gods of the night lie rotten,
And their honor be taken away,
And the noise of their names forgotten,
Thou, Lord, art god of the day.
Thou art father and savior and spirit,
O Sun, of the soul that is free,
And hath grace of thy grace to inherit
Thine earth and thy sea.

The hills and the sands and the beaches,
The waters adrift and afar,
The banks and the creeks and the reaches
How glad of thee all these are!
The flowers, overflowing, overcrowded,
Are drunk with the mad wind's mirth;
The delight of thy coming unclouded
Makes music of earth.

I, last least voice of her voices,
Give thanks that were mute in me long
To the soul in my soul that rejoices
For the song that is over my song.
Time gives what he gains for the giving
Or takes for his tribute of me;
My dreams to the wind everliving,
My song to the sea.
(1880)

## THE HIGHER PANTHEISM IN A NUTSHELL

One, who is not, we see; but one, whom we see not, is.
Surely this is not that; but that is assuredly this.

---

105. **valley . . . decision**, a reference to the prophecy of Joel regarding the judgment of God upon the enemies of his people: "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision" (*Joel*, 3:14).

4. **Our father**, Phœbus Apollo, god of the sun.

*The Higher Pantheism in a Nutshell.* This is a parody on Tennyson's *The Higher Pantheism*, page 118.

What, and wherefore, and whence? for under is over and under;
If thunder could be without lightning, lightning could be without thunder.

Doubt is faith, in the main; but faith, on the whole, is doubt.
We cannot believe by proof; but could we believe without?

Why, and whither, and how? for barley and rye are not clover;
Neither are straight lines curves — yet over is under and over.

Two and two may be four, but four and four are not eight;
Fate and God may be twain, but God is the same thing as fate.

Ask a man what he thinks, and get from a man what he feels;
God, once caught in the fact, shows you a fair pair of heels.

Body and spirit are twins; God only knows which is which —
The soul squats down in the flesh, like a tinker drunk in a ditch.

More is the whole than a part, but half is more than the whole;
Clearly, the soul is the body — but is not the body the soul?

One and two are not one, but one and nothing is two;
Truth can hardly be false, if falsehood cannot be true.

Once the mastodon was; pterodactyls were common as cocks.
Then the mammoth was God; now is He a prize ox.

Parallels all things are — yet many of these are askew;
You are certainly I, but certainly I am not you.

Springs the rock from the plain, shoots the stream from the rock;
Cocks exist for the hen, but hens exist for the cock.

God, whom we see not, is; and God, who is not, we see.
Fiddle, we know, is diddle; and diddle, we take it, is dee.
(1880)

## NEPHELIDIA

From the depth of the dreamy decline of the dawn through a notable nimbus of nebulous noonshine,
Pallid and pink as the palm of the flag-flower that flickers with fear of the flies as they float,
Are the looks of our lovers that lustrously lean from a marvel of mystic, miraculous moonshine,
These that we feel in the blood of our blushes that thicken and threaten with throbs through the throat?
Thicken and thrill as a theater thronged at appeal of an actor's appalled agitation,
Fainter with fear of the fires of the future than pale with the promise of pride in the past;
Flushed with the famishing fullness of fever that reddens with radiance of rathe recreation,
Gaunt as the ghastliest of glimpses that gleam through the gloom of the gloaming when ghosts go aghast?
Nay, for the nick of the tick of the time is a tremulous touch on the temples of terror,
Strained as the sinews yet strenuous with strife of the dead who is dumb as the dust-heaps of death;
Surely no soul is it, sweet as the spasm of erotic emotional exquisite error,
Bathed in the balms of beatified bliss, beatific itself by beatitudes' breath.
Surely no spirit or sense of a soul that was soft to the spirit and soul of our senses
Sweetens the stress of suspiring suspicion that sobs in the semblance and sound of a sigh;
Only this oracle opens Olympian, in mystical moods and triangular tenses —
"Life is the lust of a lamp for the light that is dark till the dawn of the day when we die."
Mild is the mirk and monotonous music of memory, melodiously mute as it may be,
While the hope in the heart of a hero is bruised by the breach of men's rapiers, resigned to the rod;
Made meek as a mother whose bosom-beats bound with the bliss-bringing bulk of a balm-breathing baby,
As they grope through the graveyard of creeds, under skies growing green at a groan for the grimness of God.

---

12. **fact**, deed, act.

*Nephelidia.* The title means *Cloudlets.* Swinburne here parodies his own mannerisms of diction and rhythm.

7. **rathe**, quick, fast. 14. **suspiring**, sighing, desiring 15. **Olympian**, godlike, after the manner of the gods of Mt. Olympus, in ancient Greece.

Blank is the book of his bounty beholden of old, and its binding is blacker than bluer;
Out of blue into black is the scheme of the skies, and their dews are the wine of the bloodshed of things;
Till the darkling desire of delight shall be free as a fawn that is freed from the fangs that pursue her,
Till the heart-beats of hell shall be hushed by a hymn from the hunt that has harried the kennel of kings. (1880)

## HOPE AND FEAR

Beneath the shadow of dawn's aërial cope,
With eyes enkindled as the sun's own sphere,
Hope from the front of youth in godlike cheer
Looks Godward, past the shades where blind men grope
Round the dark door that prayers nor dreams can ope,
And makes for joy the very darkness dear
That gives her wide wings play; nor dreams that fear
At noon may rise and pierce the heart of hope.
Then, when the soul leaves off to dream and yearn,
May truth first purge her eyesight to discern
What, once being known, leaves time no power to appall;
Till youth at last, ere yet youth be not, learn
The kind wise word that falls from years that fall —
"Hope thou not much, and fear thou not at all." (1882)

## ON THE DEATHS OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND GEORGE ELIOT

Two souls diverse out of our human sight
Pass, followed one with love and each with wonder:
The stormy sophist with his mouth of thunder,
Clothed with loud words and mantled in the might
Of darkness and magnificence of night;
And one whose eye could smite the night in sunder,
Searching if light or no light were thereunder,
And found in love of loving-kindness light.
Duty divine and Thought with eyes of fire,
Still following Righteousness with deep desire,
Shone sole and stern before her and above —
Sure stars and sole to steer by; but more sweet
Shone lower the loveliest lamp for earthly feet —
The light of little children, and their love. (1882)

## DICKENS

Chief in thy generation born of men,
Whom English praise acclaimed as English-born,
With eyes that matched the worldwide eyes of morn
For gleam of tears or laughter, tenderest then
When thoughts of children warmed their light, or when
Reverence of age with love and labor worn,
Or godlike pity fired with godlike scorn,
Shot through them flame that winged thy swift live pen:
Where stars and suns that we behold not burn,
Higher even than here, though highest was here thy place,
Love sees thy spirit laugh and speak and shine
With Shakespeare and the soft bright soul of Sterne
And Fielding's kindliest might and Goldsmith's grace;
Scarce one more loved or worthier love than thine. (1882)

## ADIEUX À MARIE STUART

### I

Queen, for whose house my fathers fought,
With hopes that rose and fell,
Red star of boyhood's fiery thought,
Farewell.

They gave their lives, and I, my queen,
Have given you of my life,
Seeing your brave star burn high between
Men's strife.

The strife that lightened round their spears
Long since fell still; so long
Hardly may hope to last in years
My song.

---

*On the Deaths of Thomas Carlyle and George Eliot.* Carlyle, the "stormy sophist," died in 1881; Eliot in 1880.

*Dickens.* Swinburne came under the spell of Dickens at Eton and admired him most of the English novelists.

12. **Sterne.** Laurence Sterne (1713-68), Henry Fielding (1707-54), and Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74) were among the earliest English novelists.

*Adieux à Marie Stuart.* The title means *Farewell to Mary Stuart.* See Critical Notes.

1. **my . . . fought.** Swinburne was proud of the fact that his ancestors had fought and died in Mary's support. 6. **given . . . life.** Swinburne wrote a trilogy of tragedies dealing with Mary Queen of Scots—*Chastelard* (1865), *Bothwell* (1874), and *Mary Stuart* (1881).

But still through strife of time and thought
Your light on me too fell;
Queen, in whose name we sang or fought,
Farewell.

2

There beats no heart on either border
Wherethrough the north blasts blow
But keeps your memory as a warder
His beacon-fire aglow.

Long since, it fired with love and wonder
Mine, for whose April age
Blithe midsummer made banquet under
The shade of Hermitage.

Soft sang the burn's blithe notes, that gather
Strength to ring true;
And air and trees and sun and heather
Remembered you.

Old border ghosts of fight or fairy
Or love or teen,
These they forgot, remembering Mary
The Queen.

3

Queen once of Scots and ever of ours
Whose sires brought forth for you
Their lives to strew your way like flowers,
Adieu.

Dead is full many a dead man's name
Who died for you this long
Time past; shall this too fare the same,
My song?

But surely, though it die or live,
Your face was worth
All that a man may think to give
On earth.

No darkness cast of years between
Can darken you;
Man's love will never bid my queen
Adieu.

4

Love hangs like light about your name
As music round the shell;
No heart can take of you a tame
Farewell.

Yet, when your very face was seen,
Ill gifts were yours for giving;
Love gat strange guerdons of my queen
When living.

O diamond heart, unflawed and clear,
The whole world's crowning jewel!
Was ever heart so deadly dear
So cruel?

Yet none for you of all that bled
Grudged once one drop that fell;
Not one to life reluctant said
Farewell.

5

Strange love they have given you, love disloyal,
Who mock with praise your name,
To leave a head so rare and royal
Too low for praise or blame.

You could not love nor hate, they tell us,
You had nor sense nor sting;
In God's name, then, what plague befell us
To fight for such a thing?

"Some faults the gods will give," to fetter
Man's highest intent;
But surely you were something better
Than innocent!

No maid that strays with steps unwary
Through snares unseen,
But one to live and die for; Mary,
The Queen.

6

Forgive them all their praise, who blot
Your fame with praise of you;
Then love may say, and falter not,
Adieu.

Yet some you hardly would forgive
Who did you much less wrong
Once; but resentment should not live
Too long.

They never saw your lip's bright bow,
Your swordbright eyes,
The bluest of heavenly things below
The skies.

Clear eyes that love's self finds most like
A swordblade's blue,
A swordblade's ever keen to strike,
Adieu.

---

24. **Hermitage,** a castle on the Hermitage River, a small stream in Roxborough, Scotland. Swinburne spent a day in the vicinity of the castle some years before this poem was written, and his imagination was stirred by the sight of the fortification, the scene of Mary's visit to the wounded Bothwell. 25. **burn's,** brook's. 30. **teen,** sorrow, grief.

55. **guerdons,** rewards. 73-76. **Some faults . . . innocent.** Swinburne believed that a person was the better if he had in him a touch of earth. See Critical Note on title; also *Maud,* I, 80-83, page 98, and *Lancelot and Elaine,* 132-133, page 122. 85-86. **some . . . wrong.** She should be much more ready to forgive those who, like John Knox, were her out-and-out enemies, than those, like the Earl of Murray, who pretended to be her friends.

7

Though all things breathe or sound of fight
That yet make up your spell,
To bid you were to bid the light
Farewell.

Farewell the song says only, being
A star whose race is run;
Farewell the soul says never, seeing
The sun.

Yet, wellnigh as with flash of tears,
The song must say but so
That took your praise up twenty years
Ago.

More bright than stars or moons that vary,
Sun kindling heaven and hell,
Here, after all these years, Queen Mary,
Farewell. (1882)

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

If childhood were not in the world,
But only men and women grown;
No baby-locks in tendrils curled,
No baby-blossoms blown;

Though men were stronger, women fairer,
And nearer all delights in reach,
And verse and music uttered rarer
Tones of more godlike speech;

Though the utmost life of life's best hours
Found, as it cannot now find, words;
Though desert sands were sweet as flowers
And flowers could sing like birds,

But children never heard them, never
They felt a child's foot leap and run —
This were a drearier star than ever
Yet looked upon the sun. (1882)

## A CHILD'S LAUGHTER

All the bells of heaven may ring,
All the birds of heaven may sing,
All the wells on earth may spring,
All the winds on earth may bring
All sweet sounds together;
Sweeter far than all things heard,
Hand of harper, tone of bird,
Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,
Welling water's winsome word,
Wind in warm wan weather,

One thing yet there is, that none
Hearing ere its chime be done
Knows not well the sweetest one
Heard of man beneath the sun,
Hoped in heaven hereafter;
Soft and strong and loud and light,
Very sound of very light
Heard from morning's rosiest height,
When the soul of all delight
Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled
Never forth such notes, nor told
Hours so blithe in tones so bold,
As the radiant mouth of gold
Here that rings forth heaven.
If the golden-crested wren
Were a nightingale — why, then,
Something seen and heard of men
Might be half as sweet as when
Laughs a child of seven. (1882)

## From SONNETS OF ENGLISH DRAMATIC POETS (1590-1650)

### 1. Christopher Marlowe

Crowned, girdled, garbed and shod with light and fire,
Son first-born of the morning, sovereign star!
Soul nearest ours of all, that wert most far,
Most far off in the abysm of time, thy lyre
Hung highest above the dawn-enkindled quire
Where all ye sang together, all that are,
And all the starry songs behind thy car
Rang sequence, all our souls acclaim thee sire.
"If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,"
And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were impelled
Toward one great end, thy glory — nay, not then,
Not yet might'st thou be praised enough of men. (1882)

### 2. William Shakespeare

Not if men's tongues and angels' all in one
Spake, might the word be said that might speak thee.
Streams, winds, woods, flowers, fields, mountains, yea, the sea,

---

107-108. **twenty years Ago.** See note on line 6.

*The Salt of the Earth.* Christ calls his disciples "the salt of the earth" in *Matthew*, 5:13.

*Sonnets of English Dramatic Poets* (1590-1650). The series contains twenty-one sonnets.

*Christopher Marlowe.* Marlowe (1564-93), the most brilliant of the pre-Shakespearean playwrights, was the morning star that heralded the Elizabethan day. Swinburne found him the most congenial of the Elizabethans.

What power is in them all to praise the sun?
His praise is this — he can be praised of none.
Man, woman, child, praise God for him; but he
Exults not to be worshiped, but to be.
He is; and, being, beholds his work well done.
All joy, all glory, all sorrow, all strength, all mirth,
Are his; without him, day were night on earth.
Time knows not his from time's own period.
All lutes, all harps, all viols, all flutes, all lyres,
Fall dumb before him ere one string suspires.
All stars are angels; but the sun is God.
(1882)

### 3. Ben Jonson

Broad-based, broad-fronted, bounteous, multiform,
With many a valley impleached with ivy and vine,
Wherein the springs of all the streams run wine,
And many a crag full-faced against the storm,
The mountains where thy Muse's feet made warm
Those lawns that reveled with her dance divine
Shines yet with fire as it was wont to shine
From tossing torches round the dance aswarm.

Nor less, high-stationed on the gray grave heights,
High-thoughted seers with heaven's heart-kindling lights
Hold converse; and the herd of meaner things
Knows or by fiery scourge or fiery shaft
When wrath on thy broad brows has risen, and laughed,
Darkening thy soul with shadow of thunderous wings. (1882)

### 4. Beaumont and Fletcher

An hour ere sudden sunset fired the west,
Arose two stars upon the pale deep east.
The hall of heaven was clear for night's high feast,
Yet was not yet day's fiery heart at rest.
Love leapt up from his mother's burning breast
To see those warm twin lights, as day decreased,
Wax wider, till when all the sun had ceased,
As suns they shone from evening's kindled crest.
Across them and between, a quickening fire,
Flamed Venus, laughing with appeased desire.
Their dawn, scarce lovelier for the gleam of tears,
Filled half the hollow shell 'twixt heaven and earth
With sound like moonlight, mingling moan and mirth,
Which rings and glitters down the darkling years. (1882)

### 19. The Many

Greene, garlanded with February's few flowers
Ere March came in with Marlowe's rapturous rage;
Peele, from whose hand the sweet white locks of age
Took the mild chaplet woven of honored hours;
Nash, laughing hard; Lodge, flushed from lyric bowers;
And Lilly, a goldfinch in a twisted cage
Fed by some gay great lady's pettish page
Till short sweet songs gush clear like short spring showers;
Kid, whose grim sport still gamboled over graves;
And Chettle, in whose fresh funereal verse
Weeps Marian yet on Robin's wildwood hearse;
Cooke, whose light boat of song one soft breath saves,
Sighed from a maiden's amorous mouth averse;
Live likewise ye — Time takes not you for slaves. (1882)

## CHILDREN

Of such is the kingdom of heaven.
No glory that ever was shed
From the crowning star of the seven
That crown the north world's head,

---

*Ben Jonson.* Jonson (1573?-1637) is praised for the many aspects of his genius. He could carouse with his friends and write delicate lyrics, thunderous blank verse, rollicking comedy, and stately masques (line 8). He was familiar with classic writers (line 10), and his broad experiences in actual life made him a capital satirist (line 13).

*Beaumont and Fletcher.* Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625) were joint authors of a number of plays including romantic tragi-comedies. Lines 1-4 suggest that Elizabethan drama had about reached its end when these two came.

*The Many.* Swinburne indicates the general spirit of each of the men mentioned in this sonnet—Robert Greene (1560-92), Christopher Marlowe (1564-93), George Peele (1558-98), Thomas Nash (1567-1601), Thomas Lodge (1558?-1625), John Lyly (1553?-1606), Thomas Kyd (1558?-94), Henry Chettle (*d.* 1607?), and Joshua Cooke (*fl.* 1614).

**11. Marian,** Maid Marian, a female character in the old May games, who became attached to the Robin Hood ballads and plays as the outlaw's sweetheart.

*Children.* **1. Of such . . . heaven.** From *Matthew*, 19:14.—"Jesus said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" Cf. *Matthew*, 18:1-6. **3-4. crowning star . . . head,** the North Star, the brightest of the seven stars composing the constellation of *Ursa Minor*.

No word that ever was spoken
  Of human or godlike tongue,
Gave ever such godlike token
  Since human harps were strung.

No sign that ever was given
  To faithful or faithless eyes
Showed ever beyond clouds riven
  So clear a Paradise.

Earth's creeds may be seventy times seven
  And blood have defiled each creed;
If of such be the kingdom of heaven,
  It must be heaven indeed.

(1882)

## CHILD AND POET

You send me your love in a letter,
  I send you my love in a song;
Ah, child, your gift is the better,
  Mine does you but wrong.

No fame, were the best less brittle,
  No praise, were it wide as earth,
Is worth so much as a little
  Child's love may be worth.

We see the children above us
  As they might angels above;
Come back to us, child, if you love us,
  And bring us your love.

(1882)

## ÉTUDE RÉALISTE

### 1

A baby's feet, like sea-shells pink,
  Might tempt, should heaven see meet,
An angel's lips to kiss, we think,
    A baby's feet.

Like rose-hued sea-flowers toward the heat
  They stretch and spread and wink
Their ten soft buds that part and meet.

No flower-bells that expand and shrink
  Gleam half so heavenly sweet
As shine on life's untrodden brink
    A baby's feet.

### 2

A baby's hands, like rosebuds furled
  Whence yet no leaf expands,
Ope if you touch, though close upcurled,
    A baby's hands.

Then, fast as warriors grip their brands
  When battle's bolt is hurled,
They close, clenched hard like tightening bands.

No rosebuds yet by dawn impearled
  Match, even in loveliest lands,
The sweetest flowers in all the world —
    A baby's hands.

### 3

A baby's eyes, ere speech begin,
  Ere lips learn words or sighs,
Bless all things bright enough to win
    A baby's eyes.

Love, while the sweet thing laughs and lies,
  And sleep flows out and in,
Sees perfect in them Paradise.

Their glance might cast out pain and sin,
  Their speech make dumb the wise,
By mute glad godhead felt within
    A baby's eyes.

(1883)

## THE ROUNDEL

A roundel is wrought as a ring or a starbright sphere,
With craft of delight and with cunning of sound unsought,
That the heart of the hearer may smile if to pleasure his ear
  A roundel is wrought.

Its jewel of music is carven of all or of aught —
Love, laughter, or mourning — remembrance of rapture or fear —
That fancy may fashion to hang in the ear of thought.

As a bird's quick song runs round, and the hearts in us hear
Pause answer to pause, and again the same strain caught,
So moves the device whence, round as a pearl or tear,
  A roundel is wrought.

(1883)

## IN GUERNSEY

(TO THEODORE WATTS)

### 1

The heavenly bay, ringed round with cliffs and moors,
Storm-stained ravines, and crags that lawns inlay,

---

*Étude Réaliste.* The title means *A Realistic Study.*

*The Roundel.* See note on *Rondel*, page 681.

*In Guernsey.* Guernsey is one of the largest of the Channel Islands south of England. Theodore Watts-Dunton (1832-1914) was an English critic, novelist, and poet. Swinburne lived in his home after 1879.

2. **lawns,** open spaces.

Soothes as with love the rocks whose guard secures
The heavenly bay.

O friend, shall time take even this away,
This blessing given of beauty that endures,
This glory shown us, not to pass but stay?

Though sight be changed for memory, love insures
What memory, changed by love to sight, would say —
The word that seals forever mine and yours,
The heavenly bay.

2

My mother sea, my fostress, what new strand,
What new delight of waters, may this be,
The fairest found since time's first breezes fanned
My mother sea?

Once more I give me, body and soul, to thee,
Who hast my soul forever; cliff and sand
Recede, and heart to heart once more are we.

My heart springs first and plunges, ere my hand
Strike out from shore; more close it brings to me,
More near and dear than seems my fatherland,
My mother sea.

3

Across and along, as the bay's breadth opens, and o'er us
Wild autumn exults in the wind, swift rapture and strong
Impels us, and broader the wide waves brighten before us
Across and along.

The whole world's heart is uplifted, and knows not wrong;
The whole world's life is a chant to the sea-tide's chorus;
Are we not as waves of the water, as notes of the song?

Like children unworn of the passions and toils that wore us,
We breast for a season the breath of the seas that throng,
Rejoicing as they, to be borne as of old they bore us
Across and along.

(1883)

## From A MIDSUMMER HOLIDAY

### ON A COUNTRY ROAD

Along these low pleached lanes, on such a day,
So soft a day as this, through shade and sun,
With glad grave eyes that scanned the glad wild way,
And heart still hovering o'er a song begun,
And smile that warmed the world with benison,
Our father, lord long since of lordly rime,
Long since hath haply ridden, when the lime
Bloomed broad above him, flowering where he came.
Because thy passage once made warm this clime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each year that England clothes herself with May,
She takes thy likeness on her. Time hath spun
Fresh raiment all in vain and strange array
For earth and man's new spirit, fain to shun
Things past for dreams of better to be won,
Through many a century since thy funeral chime
Rang, and men deemed it death's most direful crime
To have spared not thee for very love or shame;
And yet, while mists round last year's memories climb,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Each turn of the old wild road whereon we stray,
Meseems, might bring us face to face with one
Whom, seeing, we could not but give thanks, and pray
For England's love our father and her son
To speak with us as once in days long done
With all men, sage and churl and monk and mime,
Who knew not as we know the soul sublime
That sang for song's love more than lust of fame.
Yet, though this be not, yet, in happy time,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.

Friend, even as bees about the flowering thyme,
Years crowd on years, till hoar decay begrime
Names once beloved; but, seeing the sun the same,

---

*A Midsummer Holiday.* The three poems under this title are in the form of *ballades* (see note on *A Ballad of Dreamland,* page 713).

1. **pleached lanes,** lanes shaded by interwoven boughs. 11. **Each year . . . May.** Swinburne had great love for spring. See *A Vision of Spring in Winter,* page 711.

As birds of autumn fain to praise the prime,
Our father Chaucer, here we praise thy name.
(1884)

### In the Water

The sea is awake, and the sound of the song of the joy of her waking is rolled
From afar to the star that recedes, from anear to the wastes of the wild wide shore.
Her call is a trumpet compelling us homeward; if dawn in her east be acold,
From the sea shall we crave not her grace to rekindle the life that it kindled before,
Her breath to requicken, her bosom to rock us, her kisses to bless as of yore?
For the wind, with his wings half open, at pause in the sky, neither fettered nor free,
Leans waveward and flutters the ripple to laughter; and fain would the twain of us be
Where lightly the wave yearns forward from under the curve of the deep dawn's dome,
And, full of the morning and fired with the pride of the glory thereof and the glee,
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Life holds not an hour that is better to live in; the past is a tale that is told,
The future a sun-flecked shadow, alive and asleep, with a blessing in store.
As we give us again to the waters, the rapture of limbs that the waters enfold
Is less than the rapture of spirit whereby, though the burden it quits were sore,
Our souls and the bodies they wield at their will are absorbed in the life they adore —
In the life that endures no burden, and bows not the forehead, and bends not the knee —
In the life everlasting of earth and of heaven, in the laws that atone and agree,
In the measureless music of things, in the fervor of forces that rest or that roam,
That cross and return and reissue, as I after you and as you after me
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

For, albeit he were less than the least of them, haply the heart of a man may be bold
To rejoice in the word of the sea, as a mother's that saith to the son she bore,
"Child, was not the life in thee mine, and my spirit the breath in thy lips from of old?
Have I let not thy weakness exult in my strength, and thy foolishness learn of my lore?
Have I helped not or healed not thine anguish, or made not the might of thy gladness more?"
And surely his heart should answer, "The light of the love of my life is in thee."
She is fairer than earth, and the sun is not fairer, the wind is not blither than she.
From my youth hath she shown me the joy of her bays that I crossed, of her cliffs that I clomb,
Till now that the twain of us here, in desire of the dawn and in trust of the sea,
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches, athirst for the foam.

Friend, earth is a harbor of refuge for winter, a covert whereunder to flee
When day is the vassal of night, and the strength of the hosts of her mightier than he;
But here is the presence adored of me, here my desire is at rest and at home.
There are cliffs to be climbed upon land, there are ways to be trodden and ridden; but we
Strike out from the shore as the heart in us bids and beseeches, athirst for the foam.
(1884)

### On the Verge

Here begins the sea that ends not till the world's end. Where we stand,
Could we know the next high sea-mark set beyond these waves that gleam,
We should know what never man hath known, nor eye of man hath scanned.
Naught beyond these coiling clouds, that melt like fume of shrines that steam,
Breaks or stays the strength of waters till they pass our bounds of dream.
Where the waste Land's End leans westward, all the seas it watches roll
Find their border fixed beyond them, and a worldwide shore's control;
These whereby we stand no shore beyond us limits — these are free.
Gazing hence, we see the water that grows iron round the Pole,
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

Sail on sail along the sea-line fades and flashes; here on land
Flash and fade the wheeling wings on wings of mews that plunge and scream.
Hour on hour along the line of life and time's evasive strand

---

*On the Verge.* 1. **the sea that ends not,** the North Sea. 6. **Land's End,** the southwestern extremity of England.

Shines and darkens, wanes and waxes, slays and dies; and scarce they seem
More than motes that thronged and trembled in the brief noon's breath and beam.
Some with crying and wailing, some with notes like sound of bells that toll,
Some with sighing and laughing, some with words that blessed and made us whole,
Passed, and left us, and we know not what they were, nor what were we.
Would we know, being mortal? Never breath of answering whisper stole
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

Shadows, would we question darkness? Ere our eyes and brows be fanned
Round with airs of twilight, washed with dews from sleep's eternal stream,
Would we know sleep's guarded secret? Ere the fire consume the brand,
Would it know if yet its ashes may requicken? Yet we deem
Surely man may know, or ever night unyoke her starry team,
What the dawn shall be, or if the dawn shall be not; yea, the scroll
Would we read of sleep's dark scripture, pledge of peace or doom of dole.
Ah, but here man's heart leaps, yearning toward the gloom with venturous glee,
Though his pilot eye behold nor bay nor harbor, rock nor shoal,
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

Friend, who knows if death indeed have life or life have death for goal?
Day nor night can tell us, nor may seas declare nor skies unroll
What has been from everlasting, or if aught shall alway be.
Silence, answering, only strikes response reverberate on the soul
From the shore that hath no shore beyond it set in all the sea.

(1884)

## NEAP-TIDE

Far off is the sea, and the land is afar.
The low banks reach at the sky,
Seen hence, and are heavenward high;
Though light for the leap of a boy they are,
And the far sea late was nigh.

The fair wild fields and the circling downs,
The bright sweet marshes and meads,
All glorious with flowerlike weeds,
The great gray churches, the sea-washed towns,
Recede as a dream recedes.

The world draws back and the world's light wanes,
As a dream dies down and is dead;
And the clouds and the gleams overhead
Change, and change; and the sea remains,
A shadow of dreamlike dread.

Wild, and woeful, and pale, and gray,
A shadow of sleepless fear,
A corpse with the night for bier,
The fairest thing that beholds the day
Lies haggard and hopeless here.

And the wind's wings, broken and spent, subside;
And the dumb waste world is hoar
And strange as the sea the shore;
And shadows of shapeless dreams abide
Where life may abide no more.

A sail to seaward, a sound from shoreward,
And the spell were broken that seems
To reign in a world of dreams
Where vainly the dreamer's feet make forward
And vainly the low sky gleams.

The sea-forsaken, forlorn, deep-wrinkled,
Salt, slanting stretches of sand
That slope to the seaward hand —
Were they fain of the ripples that flashed and twinkled
And laughed as they struck the strand?

As bells on the reins of the fairies ring
The ripples that kissed them rang,
The light from the sundawn sprang,
And the sweetest of songs that the world may sing
Was theirs when the full sea sang.

Now no light is in heaven, and now
Not a note of the sea-wind's tune
Rings hither; the bleak sky's boon
Grants hardly sight of a gray sun's brow —
A sun more sad than the moon.

More sad than a moon that clouds beleaguer
And storm is a scourge to smite,
The sick sun's shadowlike light
Grows faint as the clouds and the waves wax eager,
And withers away from sight.

The day's heart cowers, and the night's heart quickens;
Full fain would the day be dead,

---

*Neap-Tide.* Neap tides are the lowest tides during the month.

And the stark night reign in his stead;
The sea falls dumb as the sea-fog thickens,
And the sunset dies for dread.

Outside of the range of time, whose breath
Is keen as the manslayer's knife
And his peace but a truce for strife,
Who knows if haply the shadow of death
May be not the light of life?

For the storm and the rain and the darkness borrow
But an hour from the suns to be,
But a strange swift passage, that we
May rejoice, who have mourned not today, tomorrow,
In the sun and the wind and the sea.
(1889)

## ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT BROWNING

He held no dream worth waking; so he said,
He who stands now on death's triumphal steep,
Awakened out of life wherein we sleep
And dream of what he knows and sees, being dead.
But never death for him was dark or dread;
"Look forth," he bade the soul, and fear not. Weep,
All ye that trust not in his truth, and keep
Vain memory's vision of a vanished head
As all that lives of all that once was he
Save that which lightens from his word; but we,
Who, seeing the sunset-colored waters roll,
Yet know the sun subdued not of the sea,
Nor weep nor doubt that still the spirit is whole,
And life and death but shadows of the soul.
(*1889;* 1890)

## THE LAKE OF GAUBE

The sun is lord and god, sublime, serene,
And sovereign on the mountains; earth and air
Lie prone in passion, blind with bliss unseen
By force of sight and might of rapture, fair
As dreams that die and know not what they were.
The lawns, the gorges, and the peaks, are one
Glad glory, thrilled with sense of unison
In strong compulsive silence of the sun.

Flowers dense and keen as midnight stars aflame
And living things of light like flames in flower
That glance and flash as though no hand might tame
Lightnings whose life outshone their stormlit hour
And played and laughed on earth, with all their power
Gone, and with all their joy of life made long
And harmless as the lightning life of song,
Shine sweet like stars when darkness feels them strong.

The deep mild purple flaked with moonbright gold
That makes the scales seem flowers of hardened light,
The flamelike tongue, the feet that noon leaves cold,
The kindly trust in man, whence once the sight
Grew less than strange, and faith bade fear take flight,
Outlive the little harmless life that shone
And gladdened eyes that loved it, and was gone
Ere love might fear that fear had looked thereon.

Fear held the bright thing hateful, even as fear,
Whose name is one with hate and horror, saith
That heaven, the dark deep heaven of water near,
Is deadly deep as hell and dark as death.
The rapturous plunge that quickens blood and breath
With pause more sweet than passion, ere they strive
To raise again the limbs that yet would dive
Deeper, should there have slain the soul alive.

As the bright salamander in fire of the noonshine exults and is glad of his day,
The spirit that quickens my body rejoices to pass from the sunlight away,
To pass from the glow of the mountain flowerage, the high multitudinous bloom,

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*On the Death of Robert Browning.* Browning died in Venice on December 12, 1889. This is the seventh in a series of sonnets on Browning's death.

6. **"Look forth."** These words are a translation of *Prospice,* the title of one of Browning's poems, page 295.

*The Lake of Gaube.* Swinburne visited the Lake of Gaube, in the heart of the Pyrenees Mountains, between France and Spain, in the spring of 1862. See Critical Notes.

6. **lawns,** levels, open spaces. 10. **living . . . light,** salamanders, which were supposed to be able to live unharmed in fire. See Critical Note on title. 27-28. **That heaven . . . death,** a reference to the local superstition that death awaited anyone who dared to bathe in the lake.

Far down through the fathomless night of the water, the gladness of silence and gloom.
Death-dark and delicious as death in the dream of a lover and dreamer may be,
It clasps and encompasses body and soul with delight to be living and free—
Free utterly now, though the freedom endure but the space of a perilous breath,
And living, though girdled about with the darkness and coldness and strangeness of death—
Each limb and each pulse of the body rejoicing, each nerve of the spirit at rest,
All sense of the soul's life rapture, a passionate peace in its blindness blest.
So plunges the downward swimmer, embraced of the water unfathomed of man,
The darkness unplummeted, icier than seas in midwinter, for blessing or ban;
And swiftly and sweetly, when strength and breath fall short, and the dive is done,
Shoots up as a shaft from the dark depth shot, sped straight into sight of the sun;
And sheer through the snow-soft water, more dark than the roof of the pines above,
Strikes forth, and is glad as a bird whose flight is impelled and sustained of love.
As a sea-mew's love of the sea-wind breasted and ridden for rapture's sake
Is the love of his body and soul for the darkling delight of the soundless lake;
As the silent speed of a dream too living to live for a thought's space more
Is the flight of his limbs through the still strong chill of the darkness from shore to shore.
Might life be as this is and death be as life that casts off time as a robe,
The likeness of infinite heaven were a symbol revealed of the lake of Gaube.

Whose thought has fashioned and measured
The darkness of life and of death,
The secret within them treasured,
The spirit that is not breath?
Whose vision has yet beholden
The splendor of death and of life?
Though sunset as dawn be golden,
Is the word of them peace, not strife?
Deep silence answers; the glory
We dream of may be but a dream,
And the sun of the soul wax hoary
As ashes that show not a gleam.
But well shall it be with us ever
Who drive through the darkness here,
If the soul that we live by never,
For aught that a lie saith, fear.

(1899)

## EDWARD LEAR (1812-1888)

### THE JUMBLIES

They went to sea in a sieve, they did;
In a sieve they went to sea;
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter's morn, on a stormy day,
In a sieve they went to sea.
And when the sieve turned round and round,
And everyone cried, "You'll be drowned!"
They called aloud, "Our sieve ain't big,
But we don't care a button; we don't care a fig—
In a sieve we'll go to sea!"
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live.
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.

They sailed away in a sieve, they did,
In a sieve they sailed so fast,
With only a beautiful pea-green veil
Tied with a ribbon, by way of a sail,
To a small tobacco-pipe mast.
And everyone said who saw them go,
"Oh! won't they be soon upset, you know,
For the sky is dark, and the voyage is long;
And, happen what may, it's extremely wrong
In a sieve to sail so fast."

The water it soon came in, it did;
The water it soon came in.
So, to keep them dry, they wrapped their feet
In a pinky paper all folded neat;
And they fastened it down with a pin.
And they passed the night in a crockery-jar;
And each of them said, "How wise we are!
Though the sky be dark, and the voyage be long,
Yet we never can think we were rash or wrong,
While round in our sieve we spin."

And all night long they sailed away;
And, when the sun went down,
They whistled and warbled a moony song
To the echoing sound of a coppery gong,
In the shade of the mountains brown,
"O Timballoo! how happy we are
When we live in a sieve and a crockery-jar!
And all night long, in the moonlight pale,
We sail away with a pea-green sail
In the shade of the mountains brown."

They sailed to the Western Sea, they did—
To a land all covered with trees;
And they bought an owl, and a useful cart,
And a pound of rice, and a cranberry-tart,

And a hive of silvery bees;
And they bought a pig, and some green jackdaws,
And a lovely monkey with lollipop paws,
And forty bottles of ring-bo-ree,
And no end of Stilton cheese.

And in twenty years they all came back —
In twenty years or more;
And everyone said, "How tall they've grown!
For they've been to the Lakes, and the Torrible Zone,
And the hills of the Chankly Bore."
And they drank their health, and gave them a feast
Of dumplings made of beautiful yeast;
And everyone said, "If we only live,
We, too, will go to sea in a sieve,
To the hills of the Chankly Bore."
Far and few, far and few,
Are the lands where the Jumblies live.
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue;
And they went to sea in a sieve.
(1871)

### THE OWL AND THE PUSSY-CAT

The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea
In a beautiful pea-green boat;
They took some honey, and plenty of money
Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
And sang to a small guitar,
"O lovely Pussy, O Pussy, my love,
What a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl,
How charmingly sweet you sing!
Oh! let us be married; too long we have tarried;
But what shall we do for a ring?"
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
To the land where the bong-tree grows;
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood,
With a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose,
His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
Your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
By the Turkey who lives on the hill.

They dined on mince and slices of quince,
Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
They danced by the light of the moon,
The moon,
The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.
(1871)

## CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY

(1831-1884)

### MORNING

'Tis the hour when white-horsed Day
Chases Night her mares away;
When the Gates of Dawn (they say)
Phœbus opes;
And I gather that the Queen
May be uniformly seen,
Should the weather be serene,
On the slopes.

When the plowman, as he goes
Leathern-gaitered o'er the snows,
From his hat and from his nose
Knocks the ice;
And the panes are frosted o'er,
And the lawn is crisp and hoar,
As has been observed before
Once or twice;

When, arrayed in breastplate red,
Sings the robin for his bread,
On the elm-tree that hath shed
Every leaf;
While, within, the frost benumbs
The still sleepy school-boy's thumbs,
And in consequence his sums
Come to grief;

But when breakfast-time hath come,
And he's crunching crust and crumb,
He'll no longer look a-glum,
Little dunce;
But be brisk as bees that settle
On a summer-rose's petal;
Wherefore, Polly, put the kettle
On at once. (1872)

### COMPANIONS

A TALE OF A GRANDFATHER

I know not of what we pondered
Or made pretty pretense to talk,
As, her hand within mine, we wandered

---

53. **Stilton cheese,** a popular brand of English cheese, originally sold at Stilton, a parish in Huntingdonshire.

*Morning.* 2. **Night her,** Night's. This is an old form of the genitive. 4. **Phœbus,** Phœbus Apollo, god of the sun. 5. **Queen,** Aurora, goddess of the dawn.

Toward the pool by the lime-tree walk,
While the dew fell in showers from the passion flowers
And the blush-rose bent on her stalk.

I cannot recall her figure:
Was it regal as Juno's own?
Or only a trifle bigger
Than the elves who surround the throne
Of the Faëry Queen, and are seen, I ween,
By mortals in dreams alone?

What her eyes were like I know not:
Perhaps they were blurred with tears;
And perhaps in yon skies there glow not
(On the contrary) clearer spheres.
No! as to her eyes I am just as wise
As you or the cat, my dears.

Her teeth, I presume, were "pearly":
But which was she, brunette or blonde?
Her hair, was it quaintly curly;
Or as straight as a beadle's wand?
That I failed to remark; it was rather dark
And shadowy round the pond.

Then the hand that reposed so snugly
In mine — was it plump or spare?
Was the countenance fair or ugly?
Nay, children, you have me there!
*My* eyes were p'haps blurred; and besides I'd heard
That it's horribly rude to stare.

And I — was I brusque and surly?
Or oppressively bland and fond?
Was I partial to rising early?
Or why did we twain abscond,
When nobody knew, from the public view
To prowl by a misty pond?

What passed, what was felt or spoken —
Whether anything passed at all —
And whether the heart was broken
That beat under that shelt'ring shawl —
(If shawl she had on, which I doubt) — has gone,
Yes, gone from me past recall.

Was I haply the lady's suitor?
Or her uncle? I can't make out;
Ask your governess, dears, or tutor.
For myself, I'm in hopeless doubt
As to why we were there, who on earth we were,
And what this is all about.

(1872)

## BALLAD

### PART 1

The auld wife sat at her ivied door,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
A thing she had frequently done before;
And her spectacles lay on her aproned knees.

The piper he piped on the hilltop high,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
Till the cow said, "I die," and the goose asked "Why?"
And the dog said nothing, but searched for fleas.

The farmer he strode through the square farmyard;
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
His last brew of ale was a trifle hard,
The connection of which with the plot one sees.

The farmer's daughter hath frank blue eyes;
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
She hears the rooks caw in the windy skies,
As she sits at her lattice and shells her peas.

The farmer's daughter hath ripe red lips;
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
If you try to approach her away she skips
Over tables and chairs with apparent ease.

The farmer's daughter hath soft brown hair;
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And I met with a ballad, I can't say where,
Which wholly consisted of lines like these.

### PART 2

She sat with her hands 'neath her dimpled cheeks,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And spake not a word. While a lady speaks
There is hope, but she didn't even sneeze.

She sat with her hands 'neath her crimson cheeks;
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
She gave up mending her father's breeks,
And let the cat roll in her best chemise.

She sat with her hands 'neath her burning cheeks,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And gazed at the piper for thirteen weeks;
Then she followed him out o'er the misty leas.

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8. **Juno,** queen of the gods. 11. **ween,** think. 22. **beadle's wand,** court-summoner's staff.

31. **breeks,** breeches.

Her sheep followed her, as their tails did them,
(*Butter and eggs and a pound of cheese*)
And this song is considered a perfect gem;
And as to the meaning, it's what you please.

(1872)

## CHARLES LUTWIDGE DODGSON
("Lewis Carroll") (1832-1898)

### From *ALICE IN WONDERLAND*

### FATHER WILLIAM

"You are old, Father William," the young man said,
"And your hair has become very white,
And yet you incessantly stand on your head —
Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

"In my youth," Father William replied to his son,
"I feared it might injure the brain;
But now that I'm perfectly sure I have none,
Why, I do it again and again."

"You are old," said the youth, "as I mentioned before,
And have grown uncommonly fat;
Yet you turned a back-somersault in at the door —
Pray, what is the reason of that?"

"In my youth," said the sage, as he shook his gray locks,
"I kept all my limbs very supple
By the use of this ointment — one shilling the box —
Allow me to sell you a couple."

"You are old," said the youth, "and your jaws are too weak
For anything tougher than suet;
Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and the beak;
Pray, how did you manage to do it?"

"In my youth," said his father, "I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life."

"You are old," said the youth, "one would hardly suppose
That your eye was as steady as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your nose —
What made you so awfully clever?"

"I have answered three questions, and that is enough,"
Said his father; "don't give yourself airs!
Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff?
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs!" (1865)

### THE MOCK TURTLE'S SONG

"Will you walk a little faster?" said a whiting to a snail,
"There's a porpoise close behind us, and he's treading on my tail.
See how eagerly the lobsters and the turtles all advance!
They are waiting on the shingle — will you come and join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?

"You can really have no notion how delightful it will be
When they take us up and throw us, with the lobsters, out to sea!"
But the snail replied, "Too far, too far!" and gave a look askance —
Said he thanked the whiting kindly, but he would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, would not join the dance.
Would not, could not, would not, could not, could not join the dance.

"What matters it how far we go?" his scaly friend replied,
"There is another shore, you know, upon the other side.
The further off from England the nearer is to France;
Then turn not pale, beloved snail, but come and join the dance.
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, will you join the dance?
Will you, won't you, will you, won't you, won't you join the dance?" (1865)

### From *THROUGH THE LOOKING-GLASS*

### JABBERWOCKY

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

---

*Father William.* This is a parody on Southey's *The Old Man's Comforts.* See Critical Notes.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
  The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
  The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand;
  Long time the manxome foe he sought —
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
  And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
  The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
  And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
  The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
  He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
  Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
  He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
  Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
  And the mome raths outgrabe. (1872)

## THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER

The sun was shining on the sea,
  Shining with all his might;
He did his very best to make
  The billows smooth and bright —
And this was odd, because it was
  The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,
  Because she thought the sun
Had got no business to be there
  After the day was done —
"It's very rude of him," she said,
  "To come and spoil the fun!"

The sea was wet as wet could be,
  The sands were dry as dry.
You could not see a cloud, because
  No cloud was in the sky;
No birds were flying overhead —
  There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
  Were walking close at hand;
They wept like anything to see
  Such quantities of sand.
"If this were only cleared away,"
  They said, "it *would* be grand!"

"If seven maids with seven mops
  Swept it for half a year,
Do you suppose," the Walrus said,
  "That they could get it clear?"
"I doubt it," said the Carpenter,
  And shed a bitter tear.

"O Oysters, come and walk with us!"
  The Walrus did beseech.
"A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
  Along the briny beach;
We cannot do with more than four,
  To give a hand to each."

The eldest Oyster looked at him,
  But never a word he said;
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
  And shook his heavy head —
Meaning to say he did not choose
  To leave the oyster-bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,
  All eager for the treat;
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
  Their shoes were clean and neat —
And this was odd, because, you know,
  They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them,
  And yet another four;
And thick and fast they came at last,
  And more, and more, and more —
All hopping through the frothy waves,
  And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
  Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
  Conveniently low;
And all the little Oysters stood
  And waited in a row.

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
  "To talk of many things:
Of shoes — and ships — and sealing-wax —
  Of cabbages — and kings —
And why the sea is boiling hot —
  And whether pigs have wings."

"But wait a bit," the Oysters cried,
  "Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath,
  And all of us are fat!"
"No hurry!" said the Carpenter.
  They thanked him much for that.

"A loaf of bread," the Walrus said,
  "Is what we chiefly need;
Pepper and vinegar besides
  Are very good indeed —

Now, if you're ready, Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed."

"But not on us!" the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.
"After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do!"
"The night is fine," the Walrus said,
"Do you admire the view?

"It was so kind of you to come!
And you are very nice!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"Cut us another slice.
I wish you were not quite so deaf —
I've had to ask you twice!"

"It seems a shame," the Walrus said,
"To play them such a trick,
After we've brought them out so far,
And made them trot so quick!"
The Carpenter said nothing but
"The butter's spread too thick!"

"I weep for you," the Walrus said;
"I deeply sympathize."
With sobs and tears he sorted out
Those of the largest size,
Holding his pocket-handkerchief
Before his streaming eyes.

"O Oysters," said the Carpenter,
"You've had a pleasant run!
Shall we be trotting home again?"
But answer came there none —
And this was scarcely odd, because
They'd eaten every one.

(1872)

## From *THE HUNTING OF THE SNARK*

### THE BAKER'S TALE

They roused him with muffins — they roused him with ice —
They roused him with mustard and cress —
They roused him with jam and judicious advice —
They set him conundrums to guess.

When at length he sat up and was able to speak,
His sad story he offered to tell;
And the Bellman cried, "Silence! Not even a shriek!"
And excitedly tingled his bell.

There was silence supreme! Not a shriek, not a scream,
Scarcely even a howl or a groan,
As the man they called "Ho!" told his story of woe
In an antediluvian tone.

"My father and mother were honest though poor —"
"Skip all that!" cried the Bellman in haste.
"If it once becomes dark, there's no chance of a Snark —
We have hardly a minute to waste!"

"I skip forty years," said the Baker, in tears,
"And proceed without further remark
To the day when you took me aboard of your ship
To help you in hunting the Snark.

"A dear uncle of mine (after whom I was named)
Remarked, when I bade him farewell —"
"Oh, skip your dear uncle!" the Bellman exclaimed,
As he angrily tingled his bell.

"He remarked to me then," said that mildest of men,
" 'If your Snark be a Snark, that is right;
Fetch it home by all means — you may serve it with greens,
And it's handy for striking a light.

" 'You may seek it with thimbles — and seek it with care;
You may hunt it with forks and hope;
You may threaten its life with a railway-share;
You may charm it with smiles and soap—' "

("That's exactly the method," the Bellman bold
In a hasty parenthesis cried,
"That's exactly the way I have always been told
That the capture of Snarks should be tried!")

" 'But oh, beamish nephew, beware of the day,
If your Snark be a Boojum! For then
You will softly and suddenly vanish away,
And never be met with again!'

"It is this, it is this that oppresses my soul,
When I think of my uncle's last words;
And my heart is like nothing so much as a bowl
Brimming over with quivering curds!

---

*The Baker's Tale.* 1. **him**, the Baker, who had fainted when the Bellman, after mentioning the "unmistakable marks" of snarks, had said, "Some are Boojums."

"It is this, it is this —" "We have had that
before!"
The Bellman indignantly said.
And the Baker replied, "Let me say it once
more.
It is this, it is this that I dread!

"I engage with the Snark — every night after
dark —
In a dreamy, delirious fight;
I serve it with greens in those shadowy scenes,
And I use it for striking a light;

"But if ever I meet with a Boojum, that day,
In a moment (of this I am sure),
I shall softly and suddenly vanish away —
And the notion I cannot endure!" (1876)

## WILLIAM SCHWENK GILBERT
## (1836-1911)

### THE YARN OF THE *NANCY BELL*

'Twas on the shores that round our coast
From Deal to Ramsgate span,
That I found alone on a piece of stone
An elderly naval man.

His hair was weedy, his beard was long,
And weedy and long was he,
And I heard this wight on the shore recite
In a singular minor key:

"Oh, I am a cook and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

And he shook his fists and he tore his hair,
Till I really felt afraid,
For I couldn't help thinking the man had
been drinking,
And so I simply said:

"Oh, elderly man, it's little I know
Of the duties of men of the sea,
And I'll eat my hand if I understand
However you can be

"At once a cook, and a captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig."

Then he gave a hitch to his trousers, which
Is a trick all seamen larn,
And having got rid of a thumping quid,
He spun this painful yarn:

" 'Twas in the good ship *Nancy Bell*
That we sailed to the Indian Sea,
And there on a reef we come to grief,
Which has often occurred to me.

"And pretty nigh all the crew was drowned
(There was seventy-seven o' soul),
And only ten of the *Nancy's* men
Said 'Here!' to the muster-roll.

"There was me and the cook and the captain
bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And the bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig.

"For a month we'd neither wittles nor drink,
Till a-hungry we did feel,
So we drawed a lot, and, accordin' shot
The captain for our meal.

"The next lot fell to the *Nancy's* mate,
And a delicate dish he made;
Then our appetite with the midshipmite
We seven survivors stayed.

"And then we murdered the bo'sun tight,
And he much resembled pig;
Then we wittled free, did the cook and me,
On the crew of the captain's gig.

"Then only the cook and me was left,
And the delicate question, 'Which
Of us two goes to the kettle?' arose,
And we argued it out as sich.

"For I loved that cook as a brother, I did,
And the cook he worshiped me;
But we'd both be blowed if we'd either be
stowed
In the other chap's hold, you see.

" 'I'll be eat if you dines off me,' says Tom;
'Yes, that,' says I, 'you'll be —'
'I'm boiled if I die, my friend,' quoth I;
And 'Exactly so,' quoth he.

"Says he, 'Dear James, to murder me
Were a foolish thing to do,
For don't you see that you can't cook *me*,
While I can — and will — cook *you!*'

"So he boils the water, and takes the salt
And the pepper in portions true

---

*The Yarn of the Nancy Bell.* This poem was first offered to *Punch* but was declined by the editor on the ground that it was too cannibalistic for his readers' tastes.

2. **Deal, Ramsgate.** These are famous watering-places about ten miles apart on the coast of Kent.

(Which he never forgot) and some chopped shalot,
And some sage and parsley too.

" 'Come here,' says he, with a proper pride
Which his smiling features tell,
' 'Twill soothing be if I let you see
How extremely nice you'll smell.'

"And he stirred it round and round and round,
And he sniffed at the foaming froth;
When I ups with his heels, and smothers his squeals
In the scum of the boiling broth.

"And I eat that cook in a week or less,
And — as I eating be
The last of his chops, why, I almost drops,
For a wessel in sight I see!

. . . . .

"And I never larf, and I never smile,
And I never lark nor play,
But sit and croak, and a single joke
I have — which is to say:

" 'Oh, I am a cook and captain bold,
And the mate of the *Nancy* brig,
And a bo'sun tight, and a midshipmite,
And the crew of the captain's gig!' " (1866)

## THE BISHOP OF RUM-TI-FOO

From east and south the holy clan
Of bishops gathered, to a man;
To Synod, called Pan-Anglican;
In flocking crowds they came.
Among them was a Bishop, who
Had lately been appointed to
The balmy isle of Rum-ti-Foo,
And Peter was his name.

His people — twenty-three in sum —
They played the eloquent tum-tum
And lived on scalps served up in rum —
The only sauce they knew.
When first good Bishop Peter came
(For Peter was that Bishop's name),
To humor them, he did the same
As they of Rum-ti-Foo.

His flock, I've often heard him tell
(His name was Peter), loved him well,
And summoned by the sound of bell,
In crowds together came.
"Oh, Massa, why you go away?
Oh, Massa Peter, please to stay."
(They called him Peter, people say,
Because it was his name.)

He told them all good boys to be,
And sailed away across the sea,
At London Bridge that Bishop he
Arrived one Tuesday night —
And as that night he homeward strode
To his Pan-Anglican abode
He passed along the Borough Road
And saw a gruesome sight.

He saw a crowd assembled round
A person dancing on the ground,
Who straight began to leap and bound
With all his might and main.
To see that dancing man he stopped,
Who twirled and wriggled, skipped and hopped,
Then down incontinently dropped,
And then sprang up again.

The Bishop chuckled at the sight,
"This style of dancing would delight
A simple Rum-ti-Foozle-ite.
I'll learn it, if I can,
To please the tribe when I get back."
He begged the man to teach his knack.
"Right Reverend Sir, in half a crack,"
Replied that dancing man.

The dancing man he worked away
And taught the Bishop every day —
The dancer skipped like any fay —
Good Peter did the same.
The Bishop buckled to his task
With *battements*, cuts, and *pas de basque*
(I'll tell you, if you care to ask,
That Peter was his name).

"Come, walk like this," the dancer said,
"Stick out your toes — stick in your head,
Stalk on with quick, galvanic tread —
Your fingers thus extend;
The attitude's considered quaint."
The weary Bishop, feeling faint,
Replied, "I do not say it ain't,
But 'Time!' my Christian friend!"

---

71. **shalot**, a kind of onion.

*The Bishop of Rum-Ti-Foo.* The imaginary bishopric of Rum-Ti-Foo may be placed in England's island possessions in the South Seas.

3. **Synod . . . Pan-Anglican.** The first General Council of the Pan-Anglican Churches, to which bishops of the Church of England came from all parts of the Empire, met in London, September 25, 1867. Gilbert's poem was published in *Fun* on November 16 of that year.

31. **Borough Road**, a street on the south bank of the Thames, between London Bridge and Lambeth Palace, where the meetings of the Synod were held. 54. **battements . . . basque**, agile dance movements, involving striking the feet together, crossing over, and quick turning.

"We now proceed to something new —
Dance as the Paynes and Lauris do,
Like this — one, two — one, two — one, two."
The Bishop, never proud,
But in an overwhelming heat
(His name was Peter, I repeat)
Performed the Payne and Lauri feat,
And puffed his thanks aloud.

Another game the dancer planned —
"Just take your ankle in your hand,
And try, my lord, if you can stand —
Your body stiff and stark.
If when revisiting your see,
You learnt to hop on shore — like me —
The novelty must striking be,
And must excite remark."

"No," said the worthy Bishop, "No;
That is a length to which, I trow,
Colonial Bishops cannot go.
You may express surprise
At finding Bishops deal in pride —
But, if that trick I ever tried,
I should appear undignified
In Rum-ti-Foozle's eyes.

"The islanders of Rum-ti-Foo
Are well-conducted persons, who
Approve a joke as much as you,
And laugh at it as such;
But if they saw their Bishop land,
His leg supported in his hand,
The joke they wouldn't understand —
'Twould pain them very much!" (1867)

## CAPTAIN REECE

Of all the ships upon the blue,
No ship contained a better crew
Than that of worthy Captain Reece,
Commanding of *The Mantelpiece*.

He was adored by all his men,
For worthy Captain Reece, R. N.,
Did all that lay within him to
Promote the comfort of his crew.

If ever they were dull or sad,
Their captain danced to them like mad,
Or told, to make the time pass by,
Droll legends of his infancy.

A feather bed had every man,
Warm slippers and hot-water can,
Brown Windsor from the captain's store,
A valet, too, to every four.

Did they with thirst in summer burn?
Lo, seltzogenes at every turn,
And on all very sultry days
Cream ices handed round on trays.

Then currant wine and ginger pops
Stood handily on all the "tops";
And, also, with amusement rife,
A "Zoetrope, or Wheel of Life."

New volumes came across the sea
From Mister Mudie's libraree;
The *Times* and *Saturday Review*
Beguiled the leisure of the crew.

Kind-hearted Captain Reece, R. N.,
Was quite devoted to his men;
In point of fact, good Captain Reece
Beautified *The Mantelpiece*.

One summer eve, at half-past ten,
He said (addressing all his men):
"Come, tell me, please, what I can do
To please and gratify my crew.

"By any reasonable plan
I'll make you happy if I can;
My own convenience count as *nil;*
It is my duty, and I will."

Then up and answered William Lee
(The kindly captain's coxswain he,
A nervous, shy, low-spoken man);
He cleared his throat and thus began:

"You have a daughter, Captain Reece,
Ten female cousins and a niece,
A ma, if what I'm told is true,
Six sisters, and an aunt or two.

"Now, somehow, sir, it seems to me,
More friendly-like we all should be,
If you united of 'em to
Unmarried members of the crew.

"If you'd ameliorate our life,
Let each select from them a wife;
And as for nervous me, old pal,
Give me your own enchanting gal!"

---

66. **Paynes and Lauris,** two families of actors, pantomimists, and dancers. The Paynes, a father and four children, acted in legitimate drama and performed in ballet and harlequinade before distinguished audiences; the Lauris, a brother and two sisters, were cheap music-hall entertainers.

*Captain Reece.* This ballad anticipates Gilbert's comic opera *H. M. S. Pinafore.*

6. **R. N.,** Royal Navy.

15. **Brown Windsor,** a kind of scented soap. 18. **seltzogenes,** apparatus for making carbonated water. 22. **"tops,"** platforms near the heads of the lower masts. 24. **Zoetrope . . . Life,** an optical toy in which figures on the inside of a revolving cylinder are viewed through slits in the cylinder and appear to be moving. 26. **Mudie's libraree,** a popular circulating library near the British Museum in London.

Good Captain Reece, that worthy man,
Debated on his coxswain's plan:
"I quite agree," he said, "O Bill,
It is my duty, and I will.

"My daughter, that enchanting gurl,
Has just been promised to an earl,
And all my other familee
To peers of various degree.

"But what are dukes and viscounts to
The happiness of all my crew?
The word I gave you I'll fulfill;
It is my duty, and I will.

"As you desire it shall befall,
I'll settle thousands on you all,
And I shall be, despite my hoard,
The only bachelor on board."

The boatswain of *The Mantelpiece*,
He blushed and spoke to Captain Reece:
"I beg your honor's leave," he said,
"If you would wish to go and wed,

"I have a widowed mother who
Would be the very thing for you —
She long has loved you from afar,
She washes for you, Captain R."

The captain saw the dame that day —
Addressed her in his playful way —
"And did it want a wedding ring?
It was a tempting ickle sing!

"Well, well, the chaplain I will seek,
We'll all be married this day week —
At yonder church upon the hill;
It is my duty, and I will!"

The sisters, cousins, aunts, and niece,
And widowed ma of Captain Reece,
Attended there as they were bid;
It was their duty, and they did.

(1868)

### From *TRIAL BY JURY*

## THE JUDGE'S SONG

When I, good friends, was called to the Bar,
  I'd an appetite fresh and hearty,
But I was, as many young barristers are,
  An impecunious party.
I'd a swallow-tail coat of a beautiful blue —
  A brief which was brought by a booby —
A couple of shirts and a collar or two,
  And a ring that looked like a ruby!

In Westminster Hall I danced a dance,
  Like a semi-despondent fury;
For I thought I should never hit on a chance
  Of addressing a British jury —
But I soon got tired of third-class journeys,
  And dinners of bread and water;
So I fell in love with a rich attorney's
  Elderly, ugly daughter.

The rich attorney, he wiped his eyes,
  And replied to my fond professions:
"You shall reap the reward of your enterprise,
  At the Bailey and Middlesex Sessions.
You'll soon get used to her looks," said he,
  "And a very nice girl you'll find her —
She may very well pass for forty-three
  In the dusk, with a light behind her!"

The rich attorney was as good as his word;
  The briefs came trooping gayly,
And every day my voice was heard
  At the Sessions or Ancient Bailey.
All thieves who could my fees afford
  Relied on my orations,
And many a burglar I've restored
  To his friends and his relations.

At length I became as rich as the Gurneys —
  An incubus then I thought her,
So I threw over that rich attorney's
  Elderly, ugly daughter.
The rich attorney my character high
  Tried vainly to disparage —
And now, if you please, I'm ready to try
  This Breach of Promise of Marriage!

(1875)

### From *THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE*

## THE POLICEMAN'S LOT

When a felon's not engaged in his employment,
  Or maturing his felonious little plans,
His capacity for innocent enjoyment

---

*The Judge's Song.* The remaining poems of Gilbert are taken from his comic operas. The Judge sings this song just after he takes his position on the bench before beginning the trial of a breach-of-promise suit.

6. **brief,** in English law, a condensed statement of the facts of a litigated case drawn up by an attorney for the use of a barrister in conducting proceedings in a court of justice. Only barristers are admitted to plead at the bar; attorneys, or solicitors, institute actions in behalf of their clients and furnish counsel (barristers) with necessary materials, facts, etc. 9. **Westminster Hall,** until 1882 the seat of the chief law courts in England. 20. **Bailey,** "Old Bailey," the central criminal court of London. **Middlesex,** a criminal court in Westminster. 33. **Gurneys,** a family of wealthy bankers and philanthropists.

*The Policeman's Lot.* The Sergeant, soft-hearted leader of sentimental police, laments that he must apprehend a band of ruthless but magnanimous pirates who infest the shores of Cornwall.

Is just as great as any honest man's.
Our feelings we with difficulty smother
When constabulary duty's to be done.
Ah, take one consideration with another,
A policeman's lot is not a happy one!

When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling,
When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,
He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling,
And listen to the merry village chime.
When the coster's finished jumping on his mother,
He loves to lie a-basking in the sun.
Ah, take one consideration with another,
The policeman's lot is not a happy one!
(1879)

## From *PATIENCE*

## THE ÆSTHETE

If you're anxious for to shine in the high æsthetic line as a man of culture rare,
You must get up all the germs of the transcendental terms, and plant them everywhere.
You must lie upon the daisies, and discourse in novel phrases of your complicated state of mind,
The meaning doesn't matter if it's only idle chatter of a transcendental kind.
And everyone will say,
As you walk your mystic way,
"If this young man expresses himself in terms too deep for *me*,
Why, what a very singularly deep young man this deep young man must be!"

Be eloquent in praise of the very dull old ways which have long since passed away,
And convince 'em, if you can, that the reign of good Queen Anne was Culture's palmiest day.
Of course you will pooh-pooh whatever's fresh and new, and declare it's crude and mean,
For Art stopped short in the cultivated court of the Empress Josephine.
And everyone will say,
As you walk your mystic way,
"If that's not good enough for him which is good enough for *me*,
Why, what a very cultivated kind of youth this kind of youth must be!"

Then a sentimental passion of a vegetable fashion must excite your languid spleen,
An attachment *a la* Plato for a bashful young potato, or a not-too-French French bean!
Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high æsthetic band,
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your mediæval hand.
And everyone will say,
As you walk your flowery way,
"If he's content with a vegetable love, which would certainly not suit *me*,
Why, what a most particularly pure young man this pure young man must be!"
(1881)

## From *IOLANTHE*

## THE SUSCEPTIBLE CHANCELLOR

The law is the true embodiment
Of everything that's excellent.
It has no kind of fault or flaw,
And I, my lords, embody the law.
The constitutional guardian I
Of pretty young wards in Chancery.
All are agreeable girls, and none
Are over the age of twenty-one.
A pleasant occupation for
A rather susceptible Chancellor!

But though the compliment implied
Inflates me with legitimate pride,
It nevertheless can't be denied
That it has its inconvenient side.
For I'm not so old and not so plain,
And I'm quite prepared to marry again;
But there'd be the deuce to pay in the Lords
If I fell in love with one of my wards;
Which rather tries my temper, for
I'm *such* a susceptible Chancellor!

And everyone who'd marry a ward
Must come to me for my accord;

---

13. **coster,** a peddler of fruit, vegetables, and fish.

*The Æsthete.* This poem is a caricature of Oscar Wilde and his fellow æsthetes. It is sung by Bunthorne, a fleshly poet, in one of his melodramatic moods. See Biographical Sketch of Wilde.

10. **reign . . . day.** The reign of Queen Anne (1702-14) was an important period in the classical movement in English literature, which emphasized perfection of form. 12. **Empress Josephine,** wife of Napoleon I and empress of the French (1763-1814).

17. **vegetable fashion.** Wilde was a vegetarian. 18. **attachment à la Plato,** a Platonic love, which involved a purely spiritual comradeship. 19. **Philistines,** persons lacking liberal culture and refinement. 20. **Piccadilly,** a famous London street.

*The Susceptible Chancellor.* Phyllis, beloved by the half-fairy Strephon and by the entire House of Lords, is a Ward of Chancery, and so can marry only with the consent of the Lord Chancellor, who in this song describes his dilemma.

6. **Chancery,** a branch of the High Court of Justice. The wardship of infants and minors left without other guardian comes under its jurisdiction. 17. **Lords,** the House of Lords, of which the Lord Chancellor is the presiding officer.

So in my court I sit all day,
Giving agreeable girls away —
With one for him, and one for he,
And one for you, and one for ye,
And one for thou, and one for thee;
But never, oh, never, a one for me!
Which is exasperating for
A highly susceptible Chancellor!

(1882)

## SAID I TO MYSELF, SAID I

When I went to the Bar as a very young man
(Said I to myself, said I),
I'll work on a new and original plan
(Said I to myself, said I).
I'll never assume that a rogue or a thief
Is a gentleman worthy implicit belief
Because his attorney has sent me a brief
(Said I to myself, said I).

I'll never throw dust in a juryman's eyes
(Said I to myself, said I),
Or hoodwink a judge who is not over-wise
(Said I to myself, said I),
Or assume that the witnesses summoned in force
In Exchequer, Queen's Bench, Common Pleas, or Divorce
Have perjured themselves as a matter of course
(Said I to myself, said I).

Ere I go into court I will read my brief through
(Said I to myself, said I),
And I'll never take work I'm unable to do
(Said I to myself, said I).
My learned profession I'll never disgrace
By taking a fee with a grin on my face
When I haven't been there to attend to the case
(Said I to myself, said I).

In other professions in which men engage
(Said I to myself, said I),
The Army, the Navy, the Church, and the Stage
(Said I to myself, said I),
Professional license, if carried too far,
Your chance of promotion will certainly mar;
And I fancy the rule might apply to the Bar
(Said I to myself, said I).

(1882)

## THE CONTEMPLATIVE SENTRY

When all night long a chap remains
On sentry-go, to chase monotony
He exercises of his brains —
That is, assuming that he's got any.
Though never nurtured in the lap
Of luxury, yet I admonish you,
I am an intellectual chap,
And think of things that would astonish you.
I often think it's comical
How Nature always does contrive
That every boy and every gal,
That's born into the world alive,
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative.
Fal, lal, la!

When in that house M.P.'s divide,
If they've a brain and cerebellum too,
They've got to leave that brain outside
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em to.
But then the prospect of a lot
Of statesmen, all in close proximity,
A-thinking for themselves, is what
No man can face with equanimity.
Then let's rejoice with loud fal, lal,
That Nature wisely does contrive
That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative.
Fal, lal, la!

(1882)

From *PRINCESS IDA*

## THE DISAGREEABLE MAN

If you give me your attention, I will tell you what I am:
I'm a genuine philanthropist — all other kinds are sham.
Each little fault of temper and each social defect
In my erring fellow-creatures, I endeavor to correct.
To all their little weaknesses I open peoples' eyes,
And little plans to snub the self-sufficient I devise;
I love my fellow-creatures — I do all the good I can —

---

*Said I to Myself, Said I.* The Chancellor refuses to admit that Strephon may love Phyllis without the Court's permission, even though the "case bubbles over with poetic emotion." He says, "I have always kept my duty strictly before my eyes, and it is to this fact that I owe my advancement to my present distinguished position." He then sings this song.

7. **attorney . . . brief.** See note on *The Judge's Song*, line 6, page 744. 14. **Exchequer . . . Divorce,** branches of the High Court of Justice.

*The Contemplative Sentry.* On guard outside the Houses of Parliament, Private Willis amuses himself with political speculations.

*The Disagreeable Man.* The misshapen and adder-tongued King Gama, who here describes himself, is a professional cynic; he is later subjected to the ingenious torture of having all his wants satisfied and hence being left with "nothing to grumble at"

Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

To compliments inflated I've a withering reply,
And vanity I always do my best to mortify;
A charitable action I can skillfully dissect;
And interested motives I'm delighted to detect.
I know everybody's income and what everybody earns,
And I carefully compare it with the income-tax returns;
But to benefit humanity, however much I plan,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why!

I'm sure I'm no ascetic; I'm as pleasant as can be;
You'll always find me ready with a crushing repartee;
I've an irritating chuckle, I've a celebrated sneer,
I've an entertaining snigger, I've a fascinating leer;
To everybody's prejudice I know a thing or two;
I can tell a woman's age in half a minute — and I do —
But although I try to make myself as pleasant as I can,
Yet everybody says I'm such a disagreeable man!
And I can't think why! (1884)

From *THE MIKADO*

## THEY'LL NONE OF 'EM BE MISSED

As some day it may happen that a victim must be found,
I've got a little list — I've got a little list
Of social offenders who might well be underground,
And who never would be missed — who never would be missed!
There's the pestilential nuisances who write for autographs —
All people who have flabby hands and irritating laughs —
All children who are up in dates, and floor you with 'em flat —
All persons who in shaking hands, shake hands with you like *that* —
And all third persons who on spoiling *tête-à-têtes* insist —
They'd none of 'em be missed — they'd none of 'em be missed!

*Chorus*

He's got 'em on the list — he's got 'em on the list;
And they'll none of 'em be missed — they'll none of 'em be missed!

There's a nigger serenader, and the others of his race,
And the piano-organist — I've got him on the list!
And the people who eat peppermint and puff it in your face,
They never would be missed — they never would be missed!
Then the idiot who praises, with enthusiastic tone,
All centuries but this, and every country but his own;
And the lady from the provinces who dresses like a guy,
And "who doesn't think she waltzes, but would rather like to try"!
And that singular anomaly, the lady novelist —
I don't think she'd be missed — I'm *sure* she'd not be missed!

*Chorus*

He's got her on the list — he's got her on the list;
And I don't think she'll be missed — I'm *sure* she'll not be missed!

And that *Nisi Prius* nuisance, who just now is rather rife,
The Judicial humorist — I've got *him* on the list!
All funny fellows, comic men, and clowns of private life —
They'd none of 'em be missed — they'd none of 'em be missed!
And apologetic statesmen of a compromising kind,
Such as — What d'ye call him — Thing'em bob, and likewise Never Mind,
And 'St — 'st — 'st — and What's-his-name, and also You-know-who —
The task of filling up the blanks I'd rather leave to *you*.

---

*They'll None of 'Em Be Missed.* This song is sung by Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner.

25. **Nisi Prius,** literally, *unless before;* a law term used of any cause involving issues of fact and appointed to be tried in the courts of Westminster unless before the day set the judges tried the cause in the county in which it arose.

But it really doesn't matter whom you put
upon the list,
For they'd none of 'em be missed —
they'd none of 'em be missed!

*Chorus*

You may put 'em on the list — you may put
'em on the list;
And they'll none of 'em be missed — they'll
none of 'em be missed! (1885)

## THREE LITTLE MAIDS FROM SCHOOL

Three little maids from school are we,
Pert as a school girl well can be,
Filled to the brim with girlish glee,
Three little maids from school!

Everything is a source of fun.
Nobody's safe, for we care for none!
Life is a joke that's just begun!
Three little maids from school!

Three little maids who, all unwary,
Come from a ladies' seminary,
Freed from its genius tutelary —
Three little maids from school!

One little maid is a bride, Yum-Yum —
Two little maids in attendance come —
Three little maids is the total sum,
Three little maids from school!

From three little maids take one away —
Two little maids remain, and they —
Won't have to wait very long, they say —
Three little maids from school!

Three little maids who, all unwary,
Come from a ladies' seminary,
Freed from its genius tutelary —
Three little maids from school! (1885)

## LET THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE CRIME

A more humane Mikado never
Did in Japan exist,
To nobody second,
I'm certainly reckoned
A true philanthropist.
It is my very humane endeavor
To make, to some extent,
Each evil liver
A running river
Of harmless merriment.
My object all sublime
I shall achieve in time —
To let the punishment fit the crime —
The punishment fit the crime;
And make each prisoner pent
Unwillingly represent
A source of innocent merriment,
Of innocent merriment!

All prosy dull society sinners,
Who chatter and bleat and bore,
Are sent to hear sermons
From mystical Germans
Who preach from ten to four.
The amateur tenor, whose vocal villainies
All desire to shirk,
Shall, during off-hours,
Exhibit his powers
To Madame Tussaud's waxwork.

The lady who dyes a chemical yellow,
Or stains her gray hair puce,
Or pinches her figger,
Is blacked like a nigger
With permanent walnut juice.
The idiot who, in railway carriages,
Scribbles on window panes,
We only suffer
To ride on a buffer
In Parliamentary trains.

My object all sublime, etc.

The advertising quack who wearies
With tales of countless cures,
His teeth, I've enacted,
Shall all be extracted
By terrified amateurs.
The music hall singer attends a series
Of masses and fugues and "ops"
By Bach, interwoven
With Spohr and Beethoven,
At classical Monday Pops.

The billiard sharp whom any one catches,
His doom's extremely hard —
He's made to dwell
In a dungeon cell
On a spot that's always barred.

---

*Three Little Maids from School.* This song is sung by Yum-Yum, Peep-Bo, and Pitti-Sing after they have been heralded by a Chorus of Yum-Yum's schoolfellows.

*Let the Punishment Fit the Crime.* This song is sung by the Mikado after he has been heralded by a procession and a Chorus.

28. **Madame Tussaud's waxwork**, an exhibition of wax-portrait models of ancient and modern personages and historical tableaux, founded by Marie Tussaud (1760-1850) and located in Marylebone Road, London. 30. **puce**, dark brown. 38. **Parliamentary trains**, trains that each railway company is required to run daily each way over its system for the convenience of third-rate passengers at a rate not over one penny a mile. 46. **masses . . . "ops."** A mass is the musical setting of certain portions of the Mass; a fugue is a musical composition developed from one or more given themes according to strict rules; ops are works. 47-48. **Bach . . . Beethoven**, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), famous German composer and musician; Ludwig Spohr (1784-1859), German composer; and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), noted Dutch composer, born in Germany. 49. **Monday Pops**, popular concerts of popular music given on Monday. A singer of cheap music is punished by being made to listen to serious music.

And there he plays extravagant matches
  In fitless finger-stalls,
    On a cloth untrue
    With a twisted cue,
  And elliptical billiard balls!

    My object all sublime, etc. (1885)

## WILLOW, TITWILLOW

On a tree by a river a little tom-tit
  Sang "Willow, titwillow, titwillow!"
And I said to him, "Dicky-bird, why do you sit
  Singing, 'Willow, titwillow, titwillow'?
Is it weakness of intellect, birdie?" I cried,
"Or a rather tough worm in your little inside?"
With shake of his poor little head he replied,
  "Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!"

He slapped at his chest, as he sat on that bough,
  Singing, "Willow, titwillow, titwillow!"
And a cold perspiration bespangled his brow,
  Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!
He sobbed and he sighed, and a gurgle he gave,
Then he threw himself into the billowy wave,
And an echo arose from the suicide's grave —
  "Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!"

Now I feel just as sure as I'm sure that my name
  Isn't Willow, titwillow, titwillow,
That 'twas blighted affection that made him exclaim,
  "Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!"
And if you remain callous and obdurate, I
Shall perish as he did, and you will know why,
Though I probably shall not exclaim as I die,
  "Oh, willow, titwillow, titwillow!" (1885)

## ARTHUR WILLIAM EDGAR O'SHAUGHNESSY (1844-1881)

### THE FOUNTAIN OF TEARS

If you go over desert and mountain,
  Far into the country of sorrow,
  Today and tonight and tomorrow,
And maybe for months and for years,
  You shall come, with a heart that is bursting
  For trouble and toiling and thirsting,
You shall certainly come to the fountain
At length — to the Fountain of Tears.

Very peaceful the place is, and solely
  For piteous lamenting and sighing,
  And those who come living or dying
Alike from their hopes and their fears;
  Full of cypress-like shadows the place is,
  And statues that cover their faces;
But out of the gloom springs the holy
And beautiful Fountain of Tears.

And it flows and it flows with a motion
  So gentle and lovely and listless,
  And murmurs a tune so resistless
To him who hath suffered and hears —
  You shall surely — without a word spoken,
  Kneel down there and know your heart broken,
And yield to the long curbed emotion
That day by the Fountain of Tears.

For it grows and it grows, as though leaping
  Up higher the more one is thinking;
  And ever its tunes go on sinking
More poignantly into the ears;
  Yea, so blessèd and good seems that fountain,
  Reached after dry desert and mountain,
You shall fall down at length in your weeping
And bathe your sad face in the tears.

Then, alas! while you lie there a season,
    And sob between living and dying,
  And give up the land you were trying
To find 'mid your hopes and your fears;
  — O the world shall come up and pass o'er you;
  Strong men shall not stay to care for you,
Nor wonder indeed for what reason
Your way should seem harder than theirs.

But perhaps, while you lie, never lifting
  Your cheek from the wet leaves it presses,
  Nor caring to raise your wet tresses
And look how the cold world appears —
  O perhaps the mere silences round you —
  All things in that place grief hath found you,
Yea, e'en to the clouds o'er you drifting,
May soothe you somewhat through your tears.

You may feel, when a falling leaf brushes
  Your face, as though someone had kissed you,
  Or think at least someone who missed you
Hath sent you a thought — if that cheers;
  Or a bird's little song, faint and broken,
  May pass for a tender word spoken;
— Enough, while around you there rushes
That life-drowning torrent of tears.

---

56. **fitless finger-stalls,** ill-fitting coverings for the fingers.

*Willow, Titwillow.* This song is sung by Ko-Ko, the Lord High Executioner of the Town of Titipu, as he tries to convince the elderly lady Katisha that he will "perish on the spot" if she does not accept his love. She had protested that no one had ever died of a broken heart.

13. **cypress-like,** dark and full of the associations of death.

And the tears shall flow faster and faster,
Brim over, and baffle resistance,
And roll down bleared roads to each distance
Of past desolation and years;
Till they cover the place of each sorrow,
And leave you no Past and no morrow;
For what man is able to master
And stem the great Fountain of Tears?

But the floods and the tears meet and gather;
The sound of them all grows like thunder.
— O into what bosom, I wonder,
Is poured the whole sorrow of years?
For Eternity only seems keeping
Account of the great human weeping;
May God, then, the Maker and Father —
May He find a place for the tears! (1870)

## From CHAITIVEL

Hath any loved you well, down there,
Summer or winter through?
Down there, have you found any fair
Laid in the grave with you?
Is death's long kiss a richer kiss
Than mine was wont to be —
Or have you gone to some far bliss
And quite forgotten me?

What soft enamoring of sleep
Hath you in some soft way?
What charmed death holdeth you with deep
Strange lure by night and day?
— A little space below the grass,
Out of the sun and shade;
But worlds away from me, alas,
Down there where you are laid?

My bright hair's waved and wasted gold,
What is it now to thee —
Whether the rose-red life I hold
Or white death holdeth me?
Down there you love the grave's own green,
And evermore you rave
Of some sweet seraph you have seen
Or dreamt of in the grave.

There you shall lie as you have lain,
Though in the world above,
Another live your life again,
Loving again your love.
Is it not sweet beneath the palm?
Is not the warm day rife
With some long mystic golden calm
Better than love and life?

The broad quaint odorous leaves like hands
Weaving the fair day through,
Weave sleep no burnished bird withstands,
While death weaves sleep for you;
And many a strange rich breathing sound
Ravishes morn and noon;
And in that place you must have found
Death a delicious swoon.

Hold me no longer for a word
I used to say or sing;
Ah, long ago you must have heard
So many a sweeter thing.
For rich earth must have reached your heart
And turned the faith to flowers;
And warm wind stolen, part by part,
Your soul through faithless hours.

And many a soft seed must have won
Soil of some yielding thought,
To bring a bloom up to the sun
That else had ne'er been brought;
And, doubtless, many a passionate hue
Hath made that place more fair,
Making some passionate part of you
Faithless to me down there. (1872)

## ODE

We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams —
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams —
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;

---

*Chaitivel.* This poem is based freely upon a *lai* of Marie de France, 12th century poet and fabulist. Sarrazine has loved Pharamond and has given him a tress of her golden hair as a token; but he has died in warfare against the Paynims and has been buried with the tress of hair wrapped around him. Thereafter Sarrazine takes a new lover, Chaitivel. One day, in a mood of pity and half-revived love, she sings this song to Pharamond; he listens from his grave.

23. **seraph**, angel.

*Ode.* Cf. Tennyson's *The Poet*, page 16.

19-20. **Built Nineveh**, etc. Nineveh, the magnificent capital of the ancient Assyrian Empire, traditionally the greatest city, and Babel, the highest tower in the world, are taken as types of superb projects conceived by dreamers. See *Genesis*, 11:1-9.

And o'erthrew them with prophesying
  To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
  Or one that is coming to birth.

A breath of our inspiration
Is the life of each generation;
  A wondrous thing of our dreaming
  Unearthly, impossible seeming —
The soldier, the king, and the peasant
  Are working together in one,
Till our dream shall become their present,
  And their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing
Of the goodly house they are raising;
  They had no divine foreshowing
  Of the land to which they are going.
But on one man's soul it hath broken,
  A light that doth not depart;
And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
  Wrought flame in another man's heart.

And therefore today is thrilling
With a past day's late fulfilling;
  And the multitudes are enlisted
  In the faith that their fathers resisted,
And, scorning the dream of tomorrow,
  And bringing to pass, as they may,
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
  The dream that was scorned yesterday.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
  Ceaseless and sorrowless we!
The glory about us clinging
  Of the glorious futures we see,
Our souls with high music ringing.
  O men! it must ever be
That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
  A little apart from ye.

For we are afar with the dawning
  And the suns that are not yet high,
And out of the infinite morning
  Intrepid you hear us cry —
How, spite of your human scorning,
  Once more God's future draws nigh,
And already goes forth the warning
  That ye of the past must die.

Great hail! we cry to the comers
  From the dazzling unknown shore;
Bring us hither your sun and your summers,
  And renew our world as of yore;
You shall teach us your song's new numbers,
  And things that we dreamed not before —
Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
  And a singer who sings no more. (1874)

## SONG

I made another garden, yea,
  For my new love;
I left the dead rose where it lay,
  And set the new above.
Why did the summer not begin?
  Why did my heart not haste?
My old love came and walked therein,
  And laid the garden waste.

She entered with her weary smile,
  Just as of old;
She looked around a little while
  And shivered with the cold.
Her passing touch was death to all,
  Her passing look a blight;
She made the white rose-petals fall,
  And turned the red rose white.

Her pale robe clinging to the grass
  Seemed like a snake
That bit the grass and ground, alas!
  And a sad trail did make.
She went up slowly to the gate;
  And there, just as of yore,
She turned back at the last to wait,
  And say farewell once more. (1874)

## ZULEIKA

Zuleika is fled away,
  Though your bolts and your bars were strong;
A minstrel came to the gate today
  And stole her away with a song.
His song was subtle and sweet,
It made her young heart beat,
  It gave a thrill to her faint heart's will,
And wings to her weary feet.

Zuleika was not for ye,
  Though your laws and your threats were hard;
The minstrel came from beyond the sea,
  And took her in spite of your guard.
His ladder of song was slight,
But it reached to her window height;
  Each verse so frail was the silken rail
From which her soul took flight.

The minstrel was fair and young;
  His heart was of love and fire;
His song was such as you ne'er have sung,
  And only love could inspire.
He sang of the singing trees,
And the passionate sighing seas,
  And the lovely land of his minstrel band;
And with many a song like these

---

21. **o'erthrew . . . prophesying.** O'Shaughnessy calls the prophets of Israel poets. The destruction of Nineveh was prophesied by Nahum (2-3), Jonah (1-4), and Zephaniah (2:13-15); of Babylon by Isaiah (13, 14, 21, 47, etc.) and Jeremiah (50-51).

He drew her forth to the distant wood,
Where bird and flower were gay,
And in silent joy each green tree stood;
And with singing along the way,
He drew her to where each bird
Repeated his magic word,
And there seemed a spell she could not tell
In every sound she heard.

And singing and singing still,
He lured her away so far,
Past so many a wood and valley and hill,
That now, would you know where they are?
In a bark on a silver stream,
As fair as you see in a dream;
Lo! the bark glides along to the minstrel's song,
While the smooth waves ripple and gleam.

And soon they will reach the shore
Of that land whereof he sings,
And love and song will be evermore
The precious, the only things;
They will live and have long delight,
They two in each other's sight,
In the violet vale of the nightingale,
And the flower that blooms by night. (1874)

## SONG

When the Rose came I loved the Rose,
And thought of none beside,
Forgetting all the other flowers,
And all the others died;
And morn and noon, and sun and showers,
And all things loved the Rose,
Who only half returned my love,
Blooming alike for those.

I was the rival of a score
Of loves on gaudy wing,
The nightingale I would implore
For pity not to sing;
Each called her his; still I was glad
To wait or take my part;
I loved the Rose — who might have had
The fairest lily's heart. (1881)

## AT HER GRAVE

I have stayed too long from your grave, it seems;
Now I come back again.
Love, have you stirred down there in your dreams
Through the sunny days or the rain?
Ah, no! the same peace — you are happy so;
And your flowers, how do they grow?

Your rose has a bud; is it meant for me?
Ah, little red gift put up
So silently, like a child's present, you see
Lying beside your cup!
And geranium leaves — I will take, if I may,
Two or three to carry away.

I went not far. In yon world of ours
Grow ugly weeds. With my heart,
Thinking of you and your garden of flowers,
I went to do my part,
Plucking up, where they poison the human wheat,
The weeds of cant and deceit.

'Tis a hideous thing I have seen, and the toil
Begets few thanks, much hate;
And the new crop only will find the soil
Less foul — for the old 'tis too late.
I come back to the only spot I know
Where a weed will never grow. (1881)

## THOMAS EDWARD BROWN*

(1830-1897)

## CHALSE A KILLEY

### TO CHALSE IN HEAVEN

So you are gone, dear Chalse!
Ah! well; it was enough —
The ways were cold, the ways were rough —
O Heaven! O home!
No more to roam —
Chalse, poor Chalse.

And now it's all so plain, dear Chalse!
So plain —
The wildered brain,
The joy, the pain —
The phantom shapes that haunted,
The half-born thoughts that daunted —
All, all is plain,
Dear Chalse!
All is plain.

Yet where you're now, dear Chalse,
Have you no memory
Of land and sea,
Of vagrant liberty?
Through all your dreams
Come there no gleams
Of morning sweet and cool
On old Barrule?

---

*At Her Grave.* This poem was written at the grave of O'Shaughnessy's wife a few months after her death.

*The poems of Brown are from *The Collected Poems of Thomas Edward Brown.* By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

*Chalse A Killey.* 23. **Barrule,** a mountain on the Isle of Man, northwest of England.

Breathes there no breath,
Far o'er the hills of Death,
Of a soft wind that dallies
Among the Curragh sallies —
Shaking the perfumed gold-dust on the streams?
Chalse, poor Chalse!

Or is it all forgotten, Chalse?
A fever fit that vanished with the night —
Has God's great light
Pierced through the veiled delusions,
The errors and confusions;
And pointed to the tablet, where
In quaint and wayward character,
As of some alien clime,
His name was graven all the time?
All the time!
O Chalse! poor Chalse.

Such music as you made, dear Chalse!
With that crazed instrument
That God had given you here for use —
You will not wonder now if it did loose
Our childish laughter, being writhen and bent
From native function — was it not, sweet saint?
But when such music ceases,
'Tis God that takes to pieces
The inveterate complication,
And makes a restoration
Most subtle in its sweetness,
Most strong in its completeness,
Most constant in its meetness;
And gives the absolute tone,
And so appoints your station
Before the throne —
Chalse, poor Chalse.

And yet while you were here, dear Chalse,
You surely had more joy than sorrow:
Even from your weakness you did borrow
A strength to mock
The frowns of fortune, to decline the shock
Of rigorous circumstance,
To weave around your path a dance
Of "airy nothings," Chalse; and while your soul,
Dear Chalse! was dark,
As an o'erwanéd moon from pole to pole,
Yet had you still an arc
Forlorn, a silvery rim
Of the same light wherein the cherubim
Bathe their glad brows, and veer
On circling wings above the starry sphere —
Chalse, poor Chalse.

Yes, you had joys, dear Chalse! as when forsooth
Right valiant for the truth,
You crossed the Baldwin hills,
And at the Union Mills,
Inspired with sacred fury,
You helped good Parson Drury
To "put the *Romans* out,"
A champion brave and stout —
Ah! now, dear Chalse, of all the radiant host,
Who loves you most?
I think I know him, kneeling on his knees —
Is it Saint Francis of Assise?
Chalse, poor Chalse.

Great joy was yours, dear Chalse! when first I met you
In that old Vicarage
That shelters under Bradda: we did get you
By stratagem most sage
Of youthful mischief — got you all unweeting
Of mirthful toys —
A merry group of girls and boys,
To hold a missionary meeting;
And you did stand upon a chair,
In the best parlor there;
And dear old Parson Corrin was from home,
And I did play a tune upon a comb;
And unto us
You did pronounce a speech most marvelous,
Dear Chalse! and then you said
And *sthrooghed* the head —
"If there'll be no objection,
We'll now *purseed* to the collection" —
Chalse, poor Chalse!

And do you still remember, Chalse,
How at the Dhoor —
Near Ramsey, *to be sure* —
I got two painters painting in the chapel
To make with me a congregation?
And you did mount the pulpit, and did grapple
With a tremendous text, and warn the nation
Of drunkenness; and in your hand
Did wave an empty bottle, so that we,

---

27. **Curragh**, an extensive region in the Isle of Man—from the Northern Mountains to the coast. Sallies are willows. 65. **"airy nothings."** From Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, 1, 16. Theseus explains that the poet's pen turns the forms of imaginary things

> "to shapes and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

70. **cherubim**, an order of angels.

76. **Baldwin hills.** Baldwin is a chapelry in the parish of Braddan, Isle of Man. The Union Mills were factories for the manufacture of woolen cloth. 79-80. **helped . . . out**, probably a reference to some incident in which William Drury, who succeeded Brown's father as vicar at Braddan, had got the better of the Roman Catholics or the High Church Anglican Party in his parish. 85. **Saint Francis**, the founder of the Franciscan Order of monks. He was born in Assisi, in central Italy, in 1182. He loved all living things and was regarded as the most blameless and gentle of all saints. He died in 1226. 89. **Bradda**, Bradda Head, a bold promontory on the coast of the Isle of Man. 97. **Parson Corrin**, William Corrin, vicar at Rushen, a village in the parish of Braddan. 102. **sthrooghed**, stroked. It is a dialect word of the Isle of Man. 107. **Dhoor**, a well of "black water" near Ramsey, a seaport on the northeast coast of the Isle.

By palpable typology,
Might understand —
Dear Chalse, you never had
An audience more silent or more sad!

And have you met him, Chalse,
Whom you did long to meet?
You used to call him *dear and sweet* —
Good Bishop Wilson — has he *taken you*
*In hand*, dear Chalse? And is he true,
And is he kind,
And do you tell him all your mind,
Dear Chalse —
All your mind?
And have you yet set up the press;
And is the type in readiness,
Founded with gems
Of living sapphire, dipped
In blood of molten rubies, diamond-tipped?
And, *with the sanction of the Governor*,
Do you, a proud compositor,
Stand forth, and *prent the Hemns?*
Chalse, poor Chalse! (*1875;* 1893)

## AN OXFORD IDYLL

Ah, little mill, you're rumbling still,
Ah, sunset flecked with gold!
Ah, deepening tinge, ah, purple fringe
Of lilac as of old!
Ah, hawthorn hedge, ah, light-won pledge
Of kisses warm and plenty,
When she was true, and twenty-two,
And I was two-and-twenty.
I don't know how she broke her vow —
She said that I was "horty";
And there's the mill a-goin' still,
And I am five-and-forty.
And sooth to tell, 'twas just as well,
Her aitches were uncertain,
Her ways though nice, not point-device;
Her father liked his "Burton."
But there's a place you cannot trace,
So spare the fond endeavor —
A cloudless sky, where Kate and I
Are twenty-two forever. (*1875;* 1893)

## OPIFEX

As I was carving images from clouds,
And tinting them with soft ethereal dyes
Pressed from the pulp of dreams, one comes, and cries —
"Forbear!" and all my heaven with gloom enshrouds.

"Forbear! Thou hast no tools wherewith to essay
The delicate waves of that elusive grain;
Wouldst have due recompense of vulgar pain?
The potter's wheel for thee, and some coarse clay!

"So work, if work thou must, O humbly skilled!
Thou hast not known the Master; in thy soul
His spirit moves not with a sweet control;
Thou art outside, and art not of the guild."

Thereat I rose, and from his presence passed,
But, going, murmured — "To the God above,
Who holds my heart, and knows its store of love,
I turn from thee, thou proud iconoclast."

Then on the shore God stooped to me, and said:
"He spake the truth; even so the springs are set
That move thy life, nor will they suffer let,
Nor change their scope; else, living, thou wert dead.

"This is thy life; indulge its natural flow,
And carve these forms. They yet may find a place
On shelves for them reserved. In any case,
I bid thee carve them, knowing what I know."
(1893)

## THE VOICES OF NATURE

This cluck of water in the tangles —
What said it to the Angles?
What to the Jutes,
This wave sip-sopping round the salt sea-roots?
With what association did it hit on
The tympanum of a Damnonian Briton?
To tender Guinevere, to Britomart,
The stout of heart,
Along the guarded beach
Spoke it the same speech
It speaks to me —
This sopping of the sea?

---

115. **palpable typology,** visible representation. 122. **Bishop Wilson,** Thomas Wilson (1663-1775), Bishop of Sodor and Man, the Anglican diocese of the Isle of Man. 135. **prent the Hemns,** print the hymns.

*An Oxford Idyll.* 10. **"horty,"** haughty. 16. **"Burton,"** a kind of ale, much drunk by the English common people.

*Opifex.* The title means *Maker.*

19. **let,** hindrance.

*The Voices of Nature.* The scenery of this poem is that near Clevedon, in East Somerset.

2. **Angles.** The Angles and the Jutes were Germanic peoples who went to England in the 5th century. The Angles, who gave their name to the country, settled in the north-eastern section. The Jutes settled in Kent. 6. **Damnonian Briton.** The Damnonians were a powerful ancient people chiefly of Cornwall and Devonshire. 7. **Guinevere,** Arthur's queen. See *Lancelot and Elaine*, page 120, and Critical Note. **Britomart,** in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, a lady knight representing Chastity.

Surely the plash
Of water upon stones,
Encountering in their ears the tones
Of dominant passions masterful,
Made but a bourdon for the chord
Of a great key, that rested lord
Of all the music, straining not the bones
Of Merlin's scull;
And in the ear of Vivian its frets
Were silver castanets
That tinkled 'mong the vanities, and quickened
The free, full-blooded pulse,
Nor sickened
Her soul, nor stabbed her to the heart.
Strange! that to me this gurgling of the dulse
Allays no smart,
Consoles no nerve,
Rounds off no curve —
Alack!
Comes rather like a sigh,
A question that has no reply —
Opens a deep misgiving
What is this life I'm living —
Our fathers were not so —
Silence, thou moaning wrack!
And yet . . . I do not know.
And yet . . . I would go back. (1893)

## DORA

She knelt upon her brother's grave,
My little girl of six years old —
He used to be so good and brave,
The sweetest lamb of all our fold;
He used to shout, he used to sing,
Of all our tribe the little king —
And so unto the turf her ear she laid,
To hark if still in that dark place he played.

No sound! no sound
Death's silence was profound;
And horror crept
Into her aching heart, and Dora wept.
If this is as it ought to be,
My God, I leave it unto Thee.

## RISUS DEI

Methinks in Him there dwells alway
A sea of laughter very deep,
Where the leviathans leap,
And little children play,
Their white feet twinkling on its crispéd edge;
But in the outer bay
The strong man drives the wedge
Of polished limbs,
And swims.
Yet there is one will say,
"It is but shallow, neither is it broad" —
And so he frowns; but is he nearer God?

One saith that God is in the note of bird,
And piping wind, and brook,
And all the joyful things that speak no word;
Then if from sunny nook
Or shade a fair child's laugh
Is heard,
Is not God half?
And if a strong man gird
His loins for laughter, stirred
By trick of ape or calf —
Is he no better than a cawing rook?

Nay 'tis a Godlike function; laugh thy fill!
Mirth comes to thee unsought;
Mirth sweeps before it like a flood the mill
Of languaged logic; thought
Hath not its source so high;
The will
Must let it by:
For though the heavens are still,
God sits upon His hill,
And sees the shadows fly;
And if He laughs at fools, why should He not?

"Yet hath a fool a laugh" — Yea, of a sort;
God careth for the fools;
The chemic tools
Of laughter He hath given them, and some toys
Of sense, as 'twere a small retort
Wherein they may collect the joys
Of natural giggling, as becomes their state:
The fool is not inhuman, making sport
For such as would not gladly be without
That old familiar noise:
Since, though he laugh not, he can cachinnate —
This also is of God, we may not doubt.

"Is there an empty laugh?" Best called a shell
From which a laugh has flown,
A mask, a well
That hath no water of its own,
Part echo of a groan,
Which, if it hide a cheat,

---

17. **bourdon**, a bass accompaniment. 20. **Merlin**, the magician of Arthur's Court. Vivian was Merlin's mistress. See note on *The Holy Grail*, 175-76, page 139. 21. **frets**, the sounds made by using frets, the ridges across the fingerboard of a stringed instrument. 27. **dulse**, a kind of coarse seaweed found along the coasts of Ireland and Scotland.
*Risus Dei*. The title means *Laughter of God*.

37. **chemic tools**, chemical tools—that is, voice and muscles. 45. **cachinnate**, chuckle.

Is a base counterfeit;
But if one borrow
A cloak to wrap a sorrow
That it may pass unknown,
Then can it not be empty. God doth dwell
Behind the feigned gladness,
Inhabiting a sacred core of sadness.

"Yet is there not an evil laugh?" Content —
What follows?
When Satan fills the hollows
Of his bolt-riven heart
With spasms of unrest,
And calls it laughter; if it give relief
To his great grief,
Grudge not the dreadful jest.
But if the laugh be aimed
At any good thing that it be ashamed,
And blush thereafter,
Then it is evil, and it is not laughter.

There are who laugh, but know not why:
Whether the force
Of simple health and vigor seek a course
Extravagant, as when a wave runs high,
And tips with crest of foam the incontinent curve,
Or if it be reserve
Of power collected for a goal, which had,
Behold! the man is fresh. So when strung nerve,
Stout heart, pent breath, have brought you to the source
Of a great river, on the topmost stie
Of cliff, then have you bade
All heaven to laugh with you; yet somewhere nigh
A shepherd lad
Has wondering looked, and deemed that you were mad.

## O GOD TO THEE I YIELD

O God to Thee I yield
The gift Thou givest most precious, most divine!
Yet to what field
I must resign
His little feet
That wont to be so fleet,
I muse. Oh, joy to think
On what soft brink
Of flood he plucks the daffodils,
On what empurpled hills
He stands, Thy kiss all fresh upon his brow,
And wonders if His father sees him now!

## MY GARDEN

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot —
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not —
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

## I BENDED UNTO ME

I bended unto me a bough of May,
That I might see and smell;
It bore it in a sort of way,
It bore it very well.
But, when I let it backward sway,
Then it were hard to tell
With what a toss, with what a swing,
The dainty thing
Resumed its proper level,
And sent me to the devil.
I know it did — you doubt it?
I turned, and saw them whispering about it.
(1900)

# JOHN LEICESTER WARREN, LORD DE TABLEY (1835-1895)

## From PHILOCTETES

### CHORUS

In wonder and time-mists
They shaped it to glory
The beautiful earth;
They gave it a vesture
Of sea to heave round it.
And over it softened
Forever the cloud-swell.

Firmly then they ringed the giant mountains,
The ancient powers.
The snows went on them flake by flake,
Till spring was warming underneath
Their hoarded silence. How it snapped with sound,
The gleaming and the leaping and the exuberant
Wrestle and trouble of down-going rills.
The shivering forests heard it and they called

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81. **stie**, path, way.

*My Garden*. 1. **wot**, knows. 6-7. **fool . . . not**. See note on Mrs. Browning's *The Cry of the Human*, line 1, page 359.

*Philoctetes*. See Critical Notes.

2. **They**, the elder gods, the ancient powers of line 9.

To the warm vernal waters in delight,
"Our roots are dry, O sweetest child of the hill;
Lap us and bathe us and drench us in exquisite
Coiling, enormous,
Limitless streams.
Let the great light be on us like a music,
Light and water flooding down with sound.
Smite the gray branch
Out in crumpled leaflets;
Let the white resinous
Ends be throbbing with the bud within;
So shall the wood lead out as with a song
Its tender vaporous greening."
So runs the forest music,
As all the great world goes
Into its daylight of the year. Behold
Winter is nature's night
And summer this earth's day.
Lonely of man stood nature at her prime;
There was no human voice about her woods,
The morning melody of birds
Praising the gods alone.
Then on the bosom of the earth arose
Man, gods' plowman of the soil.
They gave him brain to understand how strong
Their hands could be;
For these, although almighty, needed yet
The incense of his wonder. What avail
Omnipotence without some weaker thing
To be amazed? With only brother gods,
To see, as strong as they, who would create?
Natheless these men they planted to sing praises
And offer beast's blood
To out-of-reach perfection,
Mutinous grew;
Requiring justice, beholding frailty
Among celestials,
They laughed and straightway
They made their reason god,
Which all gods hate.
Therefore innumerable
Calamitous auguries
Dismayed the roaming,
Tribeless, kingless,
Men who builded god in thought.
Till Themis came, the golden-locked one,
And taught them ritual, justice, mercy,
And many an old forgotten phrasing
Of Orphic hymn,
And choral flutings and cakes well kneaded
To Pan the bud-expander:
Which is a god seated in nature's core;
Abiding with us,
No cloudy ruler in the delicate air-belts:
But in the ripening slips and tangles
Of cork-woods, in the bulrush pits where oxen
Lie soaking chin-deep;
In the mulberry orchard
With milky kexes and marrowy hemlocks,
Among the floating silken under-darnels.
He is a god this Pan
Content to dwell among us, nor disdains
The damp hot wood-smell.
He loves the flaky pine-boles sand-brown;
And, when the first few crisping leaf-falls herald
The year at wasting, he feels the ivies
Against the seamy beech-sides
Push up their stem-feet,
And broaden downwards, rounded budward
Into their orbéd tops of mealy white-green.
Pan too will watch in the open glaring
Shadeless quarry quiet locusts
Seething in the blaze on vine-leaves.
He will hear the sour sharp yelping
Of the dog-troop on the sea-marge
Tearing at some stranded carcass,
Flushing up the cranes and herons.
He will watch some bloom of a maiden
From the shrine-porch slow descending,
With her flashing silver sandals,
Bound on service to the image,
Leaning hold by the myrtle bushes,
Rinsing from the lowest marble
Stair her sacrificial urnlet.
Aye, and Pan will watch the tillage,
Millet fields and mastich coppice,
Whereby sits the bronzed and rough-lipped
Bondsman with his goad to hasten
On the oxen treading barley,
Round and round; he scoopeth eager
For his meat a pulpy gourd-head —
These old Pan considers surely
Knowing man, and all his labor,
Which the newer god-brood send him,
Lest in over-ease revolting
Man should hurl an insurrection
Titanlike against Olympus.

(1866)

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43-45. **What . . . amazed.** Cf. Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos*, page 291. 61. **Themis**, personification of law and order among the primal deities of Greece; mother of Astraea or Justice. 64. **Orphic hymn**, hymns in praise of the gods, attributed to Orpheus, mythical bard of the time prior to Homer.

66. **Pan**, woodland god and personification of nature, worshiped by the Greeks not in temples but in the forests. 74. **kexes**, plants with a hollow, milky stem. **hemlock**, a poisonous plant; it has a hollow stem. 75. **under-darnels.** Darnel is a grassy weed growing among wheat—the tares of the Bible; under-darnels are its empty seed-sheaths. 101. **mastich coppice**, thicket of evergreens. 111-112. **insurrection . . . Olympus**, a reference to the war between the Titans, the elder deities of Greece, and the later generation of gods with Zeus as their leader and Mount Olympus as their stronghold.

## FORTUNE'S WHEEL

I had a true-love, none so dear,
And a friend both leal and tried;
I had a cask of good old beer,
And a gallant horse to ride.

A little while did Fortune smile
On him and her and me;
We sang along the road of life
Like birds upon a tree.

My lady fell to shame and hell,
And with her took my friend;
My cask ran sour, my horse went lame,
So alone in the cold I end.
(1893)

## AN ODE

Sire of the rising day,
Lord of the faded ray,
King of sweet ways of morn or daylight done;
Ruler of cloud and sleep,
Whose tread is on the deep,
Whose feet are red in glory like the sun,
Whose hand binds up the winds as in a sheaf,
Whose shadow makes them tremble like a leaf.

Lordship and Fear are thine,
Upon whose brow divine
The diadem of pale eternal fire
Burns over eyes that fear
No stain of earthly tear,
Nor soften for a yearning world's desire.
The treasure of strong thunder at thy hand
Waits like an eagle watching thy command.

Thee rosy beams enshroud;
Rich airs and amber cloud
Reach the calm golden spaces of thy hall.
The floods awake with noise
Churning the deep, whose voice,
Thou heedest not; although the storm-wind call,
And break beneath the swollen vapor-bands,
In wild rains wearing at the sodden lands.

Can then our weak-winged prayer
Ascend and touch thee there,
Sailing between the gleaming gates of heaven?
Can our wail climb and smite
Thy council-seat of light?
Where for a garment is the moon-ray given
To clothe thy shoulders, and blue star-dust strown
Bickers about the borders of thy throne.

Ah, Lord, who may withstand
One reaching of thy hand,
Who from thy fury fence his house secure?
What citadel is there,
In lifted hand or prayer,
If all the radiant heaven may not endure
The scathing of thine anger, keen to blight
The strong stars rolling in their fields of light?

Arise and take thine ease,
For thou art Lord; and these
Are but as sprinkled dust before thy power.
Art thou the less divine,
If they lift hands and whine,
Or less eternal since they crawl an hour?
After a little pain to fold their hands,
And perish like the beasts that tilled their lands.

They dug their field and died,
Believed thee or denied;
Cursed at thy name, or fed thy shrine with fume;
Loved somewhat, hated more,
Hoarded, grew stiff and sore,
Gat sturdy sons to labor in their room;
Became as alien faces in their land;
Died, worn and done with as a waste of sand.

Strong are alone the dead.
They need not bow the head,
Or reach one hand in ineffectual prayer.
Safe in their iron sleep
What wrong shall make them weep,
What sting of human anguish reach them there?
They are gone safe beyond the strong one's reign;
Who shall decree against them any pain?

Will they entreat in tears
The inexorable years
To sprinkle trouble gently on their head?
Safe in their house of grass,
Eternity may pass,
And be to these an instant in its tread,
Calm as an autumn night, brief as the song
Of the wood dove. The dead alone are strong.

Love is not there, nor Hate,
Weak slaves of feebler Fate;
Their lord is nothing here, his reign is done.
Here side by side can lie
Glory and Infamy;
Hero and herdsman in red earth are one.
Their day is over; sad they silence keep,
Abashed before the perfect crowning sleep.
(1893)

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*An Ode.* 32. **Bickers,** pulsates.

## CONCLUSION

'Tis gone, the land of dreams! a grayer sky
Has leadened all the beaming sunrise zone;
The hard world wakes in cold reality,
Romance hath stilled her music, touch and tone.

It was a land of heroes, and of streams
Rolling gigantic music; dreadful heights
Beetled beneath the thunder clouds, with gleams
Of a wild sunset spread in flying lights,

Or emerald valleys, myrtle growths embayed
Whereby the masted streamers fluttering ride,
Where wakeful fountains rippled on, nor stayed
The night-long murmur of their lisping tide.

The maiden waits by some enchanted spring;
His charger watches by a bleeding knight;
The fairy princess leads her elves a ring;
The ogre crashes down the pinewood's height.

Gone? all shall go, the fable and the truth;
Ambrosial glimpses of an antique day,
Lost, as the love dream of a withered youth
In wintry eyes where charméd laughter lay.

(1895)

## HENRY AUSTIN DOBSON
## (1840-1921)

### INCOGNITA

Just for a space that I met her—
Just for a day in the train!
It began when she feared it would wet her,
That tiniest spurtle of rain;
So we tucked a great rug in the sashes,
And carefully padded the pane;
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
Longing to do it again!

Then it grew when she begged me to reach her
A dressing-case under the seat;
She was "really so tiny a creature
That she needed a stool for her feet!"
Which was promptly arranged to her order
With a care that was even minute,
And a glimpse—of an open-work border,
And a glance—of the fairyest boot.

Then it drooped, and revived at some hovels—
"Were they houses for men or for pigs?"
Then it shifted to muscular novels,
With a little digression on prigs:
She thought *Wives and Daughters* "so jolly";
"Had I read it?" She knew when I had,
Like the rest, I should dote upon "Molly,"
And "poor Mrs. Gaskell—how sad!"

"Like Browning?" "But so-so." His proof lay
Too deep for her frivolous mood,
That preferred your mere metrical *soufflé*
To the stronger poetical food;
Yet at times he was good—"as a tonic."
Was Tennyson writing just now?
And was this new poet Byronic
And clever, and naughty, or how?

Then we trifled with concerts and croquet,
Then she daintily dusted her face;
Then she sprinkled herself with "Ess Bouquet,"
Fished out from the foregoing case;
And we chattered of Gassier and Grisi,
And voted Aunt Sally a bore;
Discussed if the tight rope were easy,
Or Chopin much harder than Spohr.

And oh! the odd things that she quoted,
With the prettiest possible look,
And the price of two buns that she noted
In the prettiest possible book;
While her talk like a musical rillet
Flashed on with the hours that flew;
And the carriage, her smile seemed to fill it
With just enough summer—for Two.

Till at last in her corner, peeping
From a nest of rugs and of furs,
With the white shut eyelids sleeping
On those dangerous looks of hers,
She seemed like a snow-drop breaking,
Not wholly alive nor dead,
But with one blind impulse making
To the sounds of the spring overhead;

And I watched in the lamplight's swerving
The shade of the down-dropped lid,
And the lip-line's delicate curving,

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*Conclusion.* This poem is of interest mainly as showing the inroad of realism upon romance. Cf. Kipling's *The King*, page 889.

*Incognita.* The title means *An Unknown Woman.*

21. **Wives and Daughters**, an unfinished novel by Mrs. Gaskell that appeared serially in *The Cornhill Magazine* from August, 1864, to January, 1866. 23. **"Molly,"** the heroine of *Wives and Daughters*. 24. **"poor . . . sad."** Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell (1810-1865), English novelist, had recently died. 35. **"Esse Bouquet,"** Essence Bouquet, a heavy perfume blending the fragrance of several flowers, particularly of bergamot. 37. **Gassier**, Edouard Gassier (1822-1871), French baritone who appeared frequently in London opera. **Grisi**, Giulia Grisi (1811-1869), an Italian prima-donna who sang much in London opera. 38. **Aunt Sally**, a game, popular at English summer resorts, in which balls are thrown at puppets. 40. **Chopin**, Frédéric F. Chopin (1809-1849), Polish composer for the piano. **Spohr**, Ludwig Spohr (1784-1859), German violinist and composer.

Where a slumbering smile lay hid,
Till I longed that, rather than sever,
  The train should shriek into space,
And carry us onward — forever —
  Me and that beautiful face.

But she suddenly woke in a fidget,
  With fears she was "nearly at home,"
And talk of a certain Aunt Bridget,
  Whom I mentally wished — well, at Rome;
Got out at the very next station,
  Looking back with a merry *Bon Soir;*
Adding, too, to my utter vexation,
  A surplus, unkind *Au Revoir.*

So left me to muse on her graces,
  To doze and to muse, till I dreamed
That we sailed through the sunniest places
  In a glorified galley, it seemed;
But the cabin was made of a carriage,
  And the ocean was Eau-de-Cologne,
And we split on a rock labeled MARRIAGE,
  And I woke — as cold as a stone.

And that's how I lost her — a jewel,
  *Incognita* — one in a crowd,
Not prudent enough to be cruel,
  Not worldly enough to be proud.
It was just a shut lid and its lashes,
  Just a few hours in a train,
And I sorrow in sackcloth and ashes,
  Longing to see her again. (*1866;* 1866)

## A DEAD LETTER

*"À cœur blessé — l'ombre et le silence."*
— H. DE BALZAC

### I

I drew it from its china tomb —
  It came out feebly scented
With some thin ghost of past perfume
  That time and years had lent it.

An old, old letter — folded still!
  To read with due composure
I sought the sun-lit window-sill
  Above the gray enclosure,

That, glimmering in the sultry haze,
  Faint-flowered, dimly shaded,
Slumbered, like Goldsmith's Madam Blaize,
  Bedizened and brocaded.

A queer old place! You'd surely say
  Some tea-board garden-maker
Had planned it in Dutch William's day
  To please some florist Quaker,

So trim it was. The yew-trees still,
  With pious care perverted,
Grew in the same grim shapes; and still
  The lipless dolphin spurted;

Still in his wonted state abode
  The broken-nosed Apollo;
And still the cypress-arbor showed
  The same umbrageous hollow.

Only — as fresh young Beauty gleams
  From coffee-colored laces —
So peeped from its old-fashioned dreams
  The fresher modern traces;

For idle mallet, hoop, and ball
  Upon the lawn were lying,
A magazine, a tumbled shawl,
  Round which the swifts were flying;

And, tossed beside the Guelder rose,
  A heap of rainbow knitting,
Where, blinking in her pleased repose,
  A Persian cat was sitting.

"A place to love in — live — for aye,
  If we too, like Tithonus,
Could find some god to stretch the gray
  Scant life the Fates have thrown us;

"But now by steam we run our race
  With buttoned heart and pocket;
Our Love's a gilded, surplus grace —
  Just like an empty locket.

" 'The time is out of joint.' Who will,
  May strive to make it better;
For me, this warm old window-sill,
  And this old dusty letter."

### 2

"Dear *John* (the letter ran), it can't, can't be,
  For Father's gone to *Chorley Fair* with *Sam,*
And Mother's storing Apples — *Prue* and Me
  Up to our Elbows making Damson Jam;
But we shall meet before a Week is gone —
' 'Tis a long Lane that has no Turning,' *John!*

---

*A Dead Letter.* **"À cœur . . . silence,"** darkness and silence for the wounded heart.

11. **Madam Blaize.** See Oliver Goldsmith's *An Elegy on That Glory of Her Sex, Mrs. Mary Blaize,* 1759:

"At church, in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumbered in her pew—
But when she shut her eyes."

15. **Dutch William,** William of Orange, king of England (1688-1702); he was of Dutch descent. 22. **Apollo,** a statue of Apollo, Greek god of music and beauty. 33. **Guelder rose,** a flowering shrub, sometimes called a "Snowball tree." 38-40. **Tithonus . . . us.** Tithonus, brother of Priam, king of Troy, was granted immortality by Eos, goddess of the dawn. See Tennyson's *Tithonus,* page 44. 45. **'The time . . . joint.'** From *Hamlet,* I, 5, 188. 50. **Chorley Fair,** a weekly market held in Chorley, in North Lancashire.

"Only till Sunday next, and then you'll wait
Behind the White-Thorn, by the broken Stile —
We can go round and catch them at the Gate,
All to ourselves, for nearly one long Mile;
Dear *Prue* won't look, and Father he'll go on,
And *Sam's* two Eyes are all for *Cissy*, *John!*

"*John*, she's so smart — with every Ribbon new,
Flame-colored Sack, and Crimson Padesoy;
As proud as proud, and has the Vapors too,
Just like My Lady; — calls poor *Sam* a Boy,
And vows no Sweetheart's worth the Thinking-on
Till he's past Thirty . . . I know better, *John!*

"My Dear, I don't think that I thought of much
Before we knew each other, I and you;
And now, why, *John*, your least, least Finger-touch
Gives me enough to think a Summer through.
See, for I send you Something! There, 'tis gone!
Look in this corner — mind you find it, *John!*"

### 3

This was the matter of the note —
A long-forgot deposit,
Dropped in an Indian dragon's throat,
Deep in a fragrant closet,

Piled with a dapper Dresden world —
Beaux, beauties, prayers, and poses —
Bonzes with squat legs undercurled,
And great jars filled with roses.

Ah, heart that wrote! Ah, lips that kissed!
You had no thought or presage
Into what keeping you dismissed
Your simple old-world message!

A reverent one. Though we today
Distrust beliefs and powers,
The artless, ageless things you say
Are fresh as May's own flowers,

Starring some pure primeval spring,
Ere Gold had grown despotic —
Ere Life was yet a selfish thing,
Or Love a mere exotic!

I need not search too much to find
Whose lot it was to send it,
That feel upon me yet the kind
Soft hand of her who penned it;

And see, through two score years of smoke,
In by-gone, quaint apparel,
Shine from yon time-black Norway oak
The face of Patience Caryl —

The pale, smooth forehead, silver-tressed;
The gray gown, primly flowered;
The spotless, stately coif whose crest
Like Hector's horse-plume towered;

And still the sweet half-solemn look
Where some past thought was clinging,
As when one shuts a serious book
To hear the thrushes singing.

I kneel to you! Of those you were,
Whose kind old hearts grow mellow —
Whose fair old faces grow more fair
As Point and Flanders yellow;

Whom some old store of garnered grief,
Their placid temples shading,
Crowns like a wreath of autumn leaf
With tender tints of fading.

Peace to your soul! You died unwed —
Despite this loving letter.
And what of John? The less that's said
Of John, I think, the better. (1868)

## TO "LYDIA LANGUISH"

> *"Il me faut des émotions."*
> — Blanche Amory

You ask me, Lydia, "whether I,
If you refuse my suit, shall die."
(Now pray don't let this hurt you!)
Although the time be out of joint,
I should not think a bodkin's point
The sole resource of virtue;
Nor shall I, though your mood endure
Attempt a final Water-cure

---

62. **Padesoy,** a gown made of corded silk. 63. **Vapors,** melancholy moods, especially fashionable among ladies of the 18th century. 77. **Dresden world,** a world inhabited by the daintily sophisticated shepherds and shepherdesses of Dresden china. 79. **Bonzes,** statuettes of Buddhist monks.

103. **coif,** a linen cap. 104. **Hector's horse-plume,** described by Homer (the *Iliad*, Book 6, lines 494-5), in connection with Hector's parting from his wife. 112. **Point and Flanders,** varieties of fine lace.

*To "Lydia Languish."* Lydia Languish is the sentimental lady in R. B. Sheridan's *The Rivals*, 1775.

**"Il . . . émotions,"** "I must have my thrills," a phrase which Thackeray gave to Blanche Amory, a character in *The History of Pendennis*, Volume 2, Chapter 35.

4. **time . . . joint.** From *Hamlet*, I, 5, 188. 5. **bodkin's point.** See *Hamlet*, III, 1, 70-76.—

> "For who would bear the whips and scorn of time, . . .
> When he himself might his quietus make
> With a bare bodkin?"

8. **Water-cure.** The final water-cure is drowning; the usual water-cure involved bathing in such medicinal springs as those at Bath and Tunbridge Wells.

Except against my wishes;
For I respectfully decline
To dignify the Serpentine,
And make *hors-d'œuvres* for fishes;
But if you ask me whether I
Composedly can go,
Without a look, without a sigh,
Why, then I answer — No.

"You are assured," you sadly say
(If in this most considerate way
To treat my suit your will is),
That I shall "quickly find as fair
Some new Neæra's tangled hair —
Some easier Amaryllis."
I cannot promise to be cold
If smiles are kind as yours of old
On lips of later beauties;
Nor can I, if I would, forget
The homage that is Nature's debt,
While man has social duties;
But if you ask shall I prefer
To you I honor so,
A somewhat visionary Her,
I answer truly — No.

You fear, you frankly add, "to find
In me too late the altered mind
That altering Time estranges."
To this I make response that we
(As physiologists agree)
Must have septennial changes;
This is a thing beyond control,
And it were best upon the whole
To try and find out whether
We could not, by some means, arrange
This not-to-be-avoided change
So as to change together;
But, had you asked me to allow
That you could ever grow
Less amiable than you are now —
Emphatically — No.

But — to be serious — if you care
To know how I shall really bear
This much discussed rejection,
I answer you: As feeling men
Behave, in best romances, when
You outrage their affection; —
With that gesticulatory woe,
By which, as melodramas show,
Despair is indicated;
Enforced by all the liquid grief
Which hugest pocket-handkerchief
Has ever simulated;
And when, arrived so far, you say
In tragic accents, "Go,"
Then, Lydia, then . . . I still shall stay,
And firmly answer — No.

(*1872;* 1872)

## ROSE-LEAVES

*"Sans peser. — Sans rester."*

### A KISS

Rose kissed me today.
Will she kiss me tomorrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me today.
But the pleasure gives way
To a savor of sorrow; —
Rose kissed me today —
*Will* she kiss me tomorrow?

### CIRCE

In the School of Coquettes
Madam Rose is a scholar —
Oh, they fish with all nets
In the School of Coquettes!
When her brooch she forgets
'Tis to show her new collar;
In the School of Coquettes
Madam Rose is a scholar!

### A TEAR

There's a tear in her eye —
Such a clear little jewel!
What *can* make her cry?
There's a tear in her eye.
"Puck has killed a big fly —
And it's *horribly* cruel";
There's a tear in her eye —
Such a clear little jewel!

### A GREEK GIFT

Here's a present for Rose,
How pleased she is looking!
Is it verse? — is it prose?
Here's a present for Rose!
"*Plats*," "*Entrées*," and "*Rôts*" —
Why, it's "Gouffé on Cooking";

---

11. **the Serpentine,** a body of water in Hyde Park, London. 21-22. **Neæra . . . Amaryllis,** shepherdesses in classical Latin pastoral poetry. Cf. Milton's *Lycidas*, 64-69.—

"Alas what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?"

*Rose-Leaves.* **"Sans . . . rester,"** "without pondering, without waiting." These lyrics are in the medieval French form known as the triolet, characterized by its lightness and the set repetition of its lines.

*Circe.* Circe was the epic coquette who held the men of Ulysses in her power; see Homer's *Odyssey*, Book 5.

*A Tear.* 5. **Puck,** probably a cat, named from Shakespeare's goblin in *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

*A Greek Gift.* A Greek gift is one that brings profit to the giver—said of the Trojan Horse.

5. **"Plats . . . Rôts,"** chapter headings on "main dishes," "subordinate dishes," and "roasts" in a cook-book. 6. **"Gouffé on Cooking,"** a glorified cook-book, written in French by Jules Gouffé, chef at the Paris Jockey Club, and translated by Alphonse Gouffé, head pastry-cook to her Majesty the Queen, London, 1868.

*Here's* a present for Rose,
How *pleased* she is looking!

### "URCEUS EXIT"

I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a Sonnet.
It began *à la mode*,
I intended an Ode;
But Rose crossed the road
In her latest new bonnet;
I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a Sonnet. (1874)

## ARS VICTRIX

### (IMITATED FROM THÉOPHILE GAUTIER)

Yes; when the ways oppose —
When the hard means rebel,
Fairer the work outgrows —
More potent far the spell.

O Poet, then, forbear
The loosely-sandaled verse,
Choose rather thou to wear
The buskin — straight and terse;

Leave to the tiro's hand
The limp and shapeless style;
See that thy form demand
The labor of the file.

Sculptor, do thou discard
The yielding clay — consign
To Paros marble hard
The beauty of thy line —

Model thy Satyr's face
In bronze of Syracuse;
In the veined agate trace
The profile of thy Muse.

Painter, that still must mix
But transient tints anew,
Thou in the furnace fix
The firm enamel's hue;

Let the smooth tile receive
Thy dove-drawn Erycine;
Thy Sirens blue at eve
Coiled in a wash of wine.

All passes. ART alone
Enduring stays to us;
The Bust outlasts the throne —
The Coin, Tiberius;

Even the gods must go;
Only the lofty Rime
Not countless years o'erthrow —
Not long array of time.

Paint, chisel, then, or write;
But, that the work surpass,
With the hard fashion fight —
With the resisting mass.
(1876)

## "GOOD-NIGHT, BABETTE!"

*"Si vieillesse pouvait! —"*

SCENE — *A small neat room. In a high Voltaire chair sits a white-haired old gentleman.*

MONSIEUR VIEUXBOIS. BABETTE.

*M. Vieuxbois (turning querulously)*

Day of my life! Where *can* she get?
Babette! I say! Babette! — Babette!

*Babette (entering hurriedly)*

Coming, M'sieu'! If M'sieu' speaks
So loud, he won't be well for weeks!

*M. Vieuxbois*

Where have you been?

*Babette*

Why, M'sieu' knows —
April! . . . Ville d'Avray! . . . Ma'am'-selle
Rose!

*M. Vieuxbois*

Ah! I am old — and I forget.
Was the place growing green, Babette?

*Babette*

But of the greenness! — yes, M'sieu'!
And then the sky so blue! — so blue!

---

*"Urceus Exit."* From Horace's *Art of Poetry*, lines 21-22: "Amphora coepit institui: currente rota cur urceus exit?"— "That was a wine-jar when the molding began; why, as the wheel runs round, does it turn out a pitcher?" (Fairclough's translation.) Horace is speaking of poems that begin grandly and end trivially.

*Ars Victrix.* The title means *Art the Victor.* Gautier (1811-72) was a noted French poet, novelist, and critic.

9. **tiro,** novice, beginner. 15. **Paros,** a Greek island in the Ægean Sea; famous for its white marble quarries. 17. **Satyr,** a sylvan deity represented as part man and part horse or goat, given to riotous merriment. 18. **Syracuse,** the chief Greek city of ancient Sicily, noted for fine work in bronze. 26. **dove-drawn Erycine,** Venus, goddess of love, whose chariot was often represented as drawn by doves. She was called Erycine from the city of Ceryx, Sicily, one of her centers of worship.

27. **Sirens,** sea nymphs said to frequent an island near the coast of Italy, and by their singing to lure mariners to destruction. 32. **Coin, Tiberius,** the coin outlasts the monarch whose face it bears. Tiberius was emperor of Rome (14-37 A.D.).

*"Good-Night, Babette!"* **"Si . . . pouvait!"** From an old French proverb, adapted by H. Estienne, *Les Premices*, Epigram 191: "Si jeunesse savait! si vieillesse pouvait!"—"If youth only knew! if age only could!" **Voltaire chair,** a deep, low easy-chair with an adjustable back.

6. **Ville d'Avray,** a quiet suburb down the Seine from Paris; evidently Rose was buried there.

And when I dropped my *immortelle*,
How the birds sang!
(*Lifting her apron to her eyes*)
This poor Ma'am'selle!

*M. Vieuxbois*

You're a good girl, Babette, but she —
She was an angel, verily.
Sometimes I think I see her yet
Stand smiling by the cabinet;
And once, I know, she peeped and laughed
Betwixt the curtains . . .
Where's the draft?
(*She gives him a cup*)
Now I shall sleep, I think, Babette —
Sing me your Norman *chansonnette*.

*Babette* (*sings*)

*"Once at the Angelus*
*(Ere I was dead),*
*Angels all glorious*
*Came to my bed;*
*Angels in blue and white*
*Crowned on the head."*

*M. Vieuxbois* (*drowsily*)

"She was an angel" . . . "Once she laughed"
What, was I dreaming?
Where's the draft?

*Babette* (*showing the empty cup*)

The draft, M'sieu'?

*M. Vieuxbois*

How I forget!
I am so old! But sing Babette!

*Babette* (*sings*)

*"One was the friend I left*
*Stark in the snow;*
*One was the wife that died*
*Long,—long ago;*
*One was the love I lost . . .*
*How could she know?"*

*M. Vieuxbois* (*murmuring*)

Ah, Paul! . . . old Paul! . . . Eulalie too!
And Rose . . . And O! "the sky so blue!"

*Babette* (*sings*)

*"One had my mother's eyes,*
*Wistful and mild;*
*One had my father's face;*
*One was a child:*
*All of them bent to me —*
*Bent down and smiled!"*
(He is asleep!)

*M. Vieuxbois* (*almost inaudibly*)

"How I forget!"
"I am so old!" . . . "Good night, Babette!"
(*1876*; 1876)

## "YOU BID ME TRY"

You bid me try, BLUE-EYES, to write
A Rondeau. What! — forthwith? — tonight?
Reflect. Some skill I have, 'tis true;
But thirteen lines! — and rimed on two!
"Refrain," as well. Ah, hapless plight!

Still, there are five lines — ranged aright.
These Gallic bonds, I feared, would fright
My easy Muse. They did, till you —
*You* bid me try!

That makes them eight. The port's in sight —
'Tis all because your eyes are bright!
Now just a pair to end in "oo" —
When maids command, what can't we do?
Behold! — the RONDEAU, tasteful, light,
You bid me try!
(1876)

## THE CURÉ'S PROGRESS

Monsieur the Curé down the street
Comes with his kind old face —
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

You may see him pass by the little *"Grande Place,"*
And the tiny *"Hôtel-de-Ville"*;
He smiles as he goes to the *fleuriste* Rose,
And the *pompier* Théophile.

He turns, as a rule, through the *"Marché"* cool,
Where the noisy fish-wives call;
And his compliment pays to the *"belle Thérèse,"*
As she knits in her dusky stall.

---

11. **immortelle,** a daisy-like flower, the everlasting, often used for decorating graves. 20. **chansonnette,** a folk-song. 21. **Angelus,** the bell rung at morning, noon, or evening to summon worshipers to recite the Angelus, a prayer commemorating the Annunciation.

*"You Bid Me Try."* This poem, adapted from the original of the French poet Vincent Voiture (1598-1648), exemplifies its own form—a rondeau, which consists of thirteen lines running on two rimes, and an unrimed refrain taken from the beginning of the first line. The form is of French origin.
7. **Gallic bonds,** the restrictions imposed by the French (Gallic) form.

*The Curé's Progress.* The title means *The Parish Priest on a Stroll.*
5. **"Grande Place,"** the public square. 6. **"Hôtel-de-Ville,"** the town hall. 7. **fleuriste,** florist. 8. **pompier,** fireman. 9. **"Marché,"** public market. 11. **"belle Thérèse,"** beautiful Theresa.

There's a letter to drop at the locksmith's shop,
And Toto, the locksmith's niece,
Has jubilant hopes, for the Curé gropes
In his tails for a *pain d'épice*.

There's a little dispute with a merchant of fruit,
Who is said to be heterodox,
That will ended be with a "*Ma foi, oui!*"
And a pinch from the Curé's box.

There is also a word that no one heard
To the furrier's daughter Lou;
And a pale cheek fed with a flickering red,
And a "*Bon Dieu garde M'sieu'!*"

But a grander way for the *Sous-Préfet,*
And a bow for Ma'am'selle Anne;
And a mock "off-hat" to the Notary's cat,
And a nod to the Sacristan —

For ever through life the Curé goes
With a smile on his kind old face —
With his coat worn bare, and his straggling hair,
And his green umbrella-case.

(*1878;* 1878)

## ON A FAN THAT BELONGED TO THE MARQUISE DE POMPADOUR

Chicken-skin, delicate, white,
Painted by Carlo Vanloo,
Loves in a riot of light,
Roses and vaporous blue;
Hark to the dainty *frou-frou!*
Picture above, if you can,
Eyes that could melt as the dew —
This was the Pompadour's fan!

See how they rise at the sight,
Thronging the *Œil de Bœuf* through
Courtiers as butterflies bright,
Beauties that Fragonard drew,
*Talon-rouge*, falbala, queue,
Cardinal, Duke — to a man,
Eager to sigh or to sue —
This was the Pompadour's fan!

Ah, but things more than polite
Hung on this toy, *voyez-vous!*
Matters of state and of might,
Things that great ministers do;
Things that, maybe, overthrew
Those in whose brains they began;
Here was the sign and the cue —
This was the Pompadour's fan!

*Envoy*

Where are the secrets it knew?
Weavings of plot and of plan?
— But where is the Pompadour, too?
*This* was the Pompadour's *fan!*

(*1878;* 1878)

## ON THE HURRY OF THIS TIME

With slower pen men used to write,
Of old, when "letters" were "polite";
In Anna's, or in George's days,
They could afford to turn a phrase,
Or trim a straggling theme aright.

They knew not steam; electric light
Not yet had dazed their calmer sight; —
They meted out both blame and praise
With slower pen.

Too swiftly now the hours take flight!
What's read at morn is dead at night;
Scant space have we for Art's delays,
Whose breathless thought so briefly stays,
We may not work — ah! would we might! —
With slower pen.

(*1882;* 1882)

## THE LADIES OF ST. JAMES'S

### A PROPER NEW BALLAD OF THE COUNTRY AND THE TOWN

The ladies of St. James's
Go swinging to the play;
Their footmen run before them,
With a "Stand by! Clear the way!"
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!

---

16. **pain d'épice,** piece of gingerbread. 19. **"Ma foi, oui!"** "You're certainly right." 20. **pinch . . . box,** a pinch of snuff. 24. **"Bon . . . M'sieu'!"** "God protect you, sir." 25. **Sous-Préfet,** the highest state official in the arrondissement, or county, to which the town belongs. 28. **Sacristan,** the church functionary who has charge of the sacred vessels and vestments.

*On a Fan That Belonged to the Marquise de Pompadour.* This is a *ballade* in honor of Jeanne Antoinette Poisson le Normant d'Étioles (1721-1764), mistress of Louis XV of France, and a lady of great political astuteness and power. (For an explanation of the *ballade* form, see note on Swinburne's *A Ballad of Dreamland,* page 713.)

2. **Carlo Vanloo,** a painter (1705-1765), high in the favor of Louis XV and the court. 5. **frou-frou,** the rustling of skirts. 10. **Œil de Bœuf,** a waiting-room in the royal palace at Versailles. 12. **Fragonard,** Jean Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), fashionable painter of amorous and gay ladies at the French court. 13. **Talon . . . queue,** characteristic details in the aristocratic dress of the period—red heels, plaited flounces, and pigtails.

18. **voyez-vous!** don't you see?

*On the Hurry of This Time.* This is a rondeau (see note on "*You Bid Me Try,*" page 764).

3. **Anna's . . . George's days,** the Neo-Classic age of English literature, comprising the reigns of Anne (1702-14) and George I (1714-27).

*The Ladies of St. James's.* St. James is a fashionable district in London with Pall Mall as its principal thoroughfare.

*Sub-title.* **country . . . town.** London is the "town"; the rest of the British Isles is the "country."

She takes her buckled shoon,
When we go out a-courting
Beneath the harvest moon.

The ladies of St. James's
Wear satin on their backs;
They sit all night at *Ombre*,
With candles all of wax.
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
She dons her russet gown,
And runs to gather May dew
Before the world is down.

The ladies of St. James's!
They are so fine and fair,
You'd think a box of essences
Was broken in the air;
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
The breath of heath and furze,
When breezes blow at morning,
Is not so fresh as hers.

The ladies of St. James's!
They're painted to the eyes;
Their white it stays forever,
Their red it never dies.
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
Her color comes and goes;
It trembles to a lily —
It wavers to a rose.

The ladies of St. James's!
You scarce can understand
The half of all their speeches,
Their phrases are so grand;
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
Her shy and simple words
Are clear as after rain-drops
The music of the birds.

The ladies of St. James's!
They have their fits and freaks;
They smile on you — for seconds,
They frown on you — for weeks.
But Phyllida, my Phyllida!
Come either storm or shine,
From Shrove-tide unto Shrove-tide,
Is always true — and mine.

My Phyllida! my Phyllida!
I care not though they heap
The hearts of all St. James's,
And give me all to keep;
I care not whose the beauties
Of all the world may be,
For Phyllida — for Phyllida
Is all the world to me! (*1883;* 1883)

## ON A NANKIN PLATE

"Ah me, but it might have been!
Was there ever so dismal a fate?" —
Quoth the little blue mandarin.

"Such a maid as was never seen!
She passed, though I cried to her 'Wait' —
Ah me, but it might have been!

"I cried, O my Flower, my Queen,
Be mine!' 'Twas precipitate" —
Quoth the little blue mandarin —

"But then . . . she was just sixteen,
Long-eyed — as a lily straight —
Ah me, but it might have been!

"As it was, from her palankeen,
She laughed — 'You're a week too late!' "
(Quoth the little blue mandarin.)

"That is why, in a mist of spleen,
I mourn on this Nankin Plate.
Ah me, but it might have been!" —
Quoth the little blue mandarin. (*1883;* 1883)

## "IN AFTER DAYS"

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question nor reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

---

6. **shoon,** shoes. 11. **Ombre,** the 18th century equivalent of bridge; for a graphic description of the game, see Pope's *Rape of the Lock,* Canto 3. 14. **russet,** rustic, homespun; made of coarse brown cloth. 47. **Shrove-tide,** the three days just before Lent.

*On a Nankin Plate.* The Nankin blue-and-white china porcelain, made at the Imperial works at King-te-chin and exported from Nankin, was much in vogue in England at the time; compare Lang's *Ballade of Blue China,* page 796. Dobson's poem is a villanelle, an old French form of lyric.

3. **mandarin,** a Chinese official of army or state. 13. **palankeen,** an enclosed chair borne on the shoulders of porters.

*"In After Days."* This is a rondeau (see note on "*You Bid Me Try,*" page 764). "The old French forms which M. Théodore de Banville has turned to such good use in his *Odes Funambulesques* and *Occidentales* are rather better known at this moment [1877] than when, in the course of 1876, most of these attempts were published. The rondeau (not the first in English by a century or so) is here written upon the model of Voiture; the rondel upon that of Charles of Orleans, but with a (symmetric) deviation in the arrangement of the lines . . . " (Dobson's note).

But yet, now living, fain were I
That someone then should testify,
Saying — "He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none? — Then let my memory die
In after days!

(*1884;* 1884)

## "WHEN BURBADGE PLAYED"

When Burbadge played, the stage was bare
Of fount and temple, tower and stair;
Two backswords eked a battle out;
Two supers made a rabble rout;
The throne of Denmark was a chair!

And yet, no less, the audience there
Thrilled through all changes of Despair,
Hope, Anger, Fear, Delight, and Doubt
When Burbadge played!

This is the Actor's gift: to share
All moods, all passions, nor to care
One whit for scene, so he without
Can lead men's minds the roundabout
Stirred as of old those hearers were
When Burbadge played!

(*1885;* 1885)

## A DIALOGUE

### TO THE MEMORY OF MR. ALEXANDER POPE

*"Non injussa cano."* — VIRGIL

*Poet.* I sing of Pope —
*Friend.* What, Pope, the Twitnam Bard,
Whom Dennis, Cibber, Tibbald pushed so hard!
Pope of the *Dunciad!* Pope who dared to woo,
And then to libel, Wortley-Montagu!
Pope of the *Ham-walks* story —
*Poet.* Scandals all!
Scandals that now I care not to recall.
Surely a little, in two hundred Years,
One may neglect Contemporary Sneers —
Surely allowance for the Man may make
That had all Grub Street yelping in his Wake!
And who (I ask you) has been never Mean,
When urged by Envy, Anger, or the Spleen?
No; I prefer to look on Pope as one
Not rightly happy till his Life was done;
Whose whole Career, romance it as you please,
Was (what he called it) but a "long Disease."
Think of his Lot — his Pilgrimage of Pain,
His "crazy Carcass," and his restless Brain;
Think of his Night-Hours with their Feet of Lead,
His dreary Vigil and his aching Head;
Think of all this, and marvel then to find
The "crooked Body with a crooked Mind!"
Nay rather, marvel that, in Fate's Despite,
You find so much to solace and delight —
So much of Courage, and of Purpose high
In that unequal Struggle *not* to die.
I grant you freely that Pope played his Part
Sometimes ignobly — but he loved his Art;
I grant you freely that he sought his Ends,
Not always wisely — but he loved his Friends;
And who for Friends a nobler Roll could show —
Swift, St. John, Bathurst, Marchmont, Peterb'ro',
Arbuthnot—
*Friend.* ATTICUS?
*Poet.* Well (*entre nous*),
Most that he said of Addison was *true*.
Plain Truth you know —
*Friend.* Is often not polite
(So *Hamlet* thought) —
*Poet.* And Hamlet (*Sir*) was right.
But leave Pope's Life. Today, methinks, we touch
The Work too little and the Man too much.
Take up the *Lock*, the *Satires*, *Eloise* —
What Art supreme, what Elegance, what Ease!
How keen the Irony, the Wit how bright,
The Style how rapid, and the Verse how light!
Then read once more, and you shall wonder yet
At Skill, at Turn, at Point, at Epithet.
"True Wit is Nature to Advantage dressed"—
Was ever Thought so pithily expressed?
"And ten low Words oft creep in one dull Line" —
Ah, what a Homily on Yours . . . and Mine!
Or take — to choose at Random — take but This —
"Ten censure wrong for one that writes amiss."
*Friend.* Packed and precise, no Doubt. Yet surely those
Are but the Qualities we ask of Prose.
Was he a Poet?
*Poet.* Yes; if that be what
Byron was certainly and Bowles was not;

---

*"When Burbadge Played."* This is another rondeau (see note on *"You Bid Me Try,"* page 764, and on *"In After Days,"* page 766). Richard Burbadge (c. 1567-1619) was a business associate of Shakespeare and the most popular actor of his time.

*A Dialogue to the Memory of Mr. Alexander Pope.* "Non . . . cano," "Not unbidden do I sing"; from Virgil's sixth *Eclogue*, line 9.

For a discussion of the literary background of the poem see Critical Notes.

Or say you grant him, to come nearer Date,
What Dryden had, that was denied to Tate —
*Friend.* Which means, you claim for him the Spark divine,
Yet scarce would place him on the highest Line —
*Poet.* True, there are classes. Pope was most of all
Akin to Horace, Persius, Juvenal;
Pope was, like them, the Censor of his Age,
An Age more suited to Repose than Rage;
When Riming turned from Freedom to the Schools,
And shocked with License, shuddered into Rules;
When Phœbus touched the Poet's trembling Ear
With one supreme Commandment, *Be thou Clear;*
When Thought meant less to reason than compile,
And the Muse labored . . . chiefly with the File.
Beneath full Wigs no Lyric drew its Breath
As in the Days of great Elizabeth;
And to the Bards of Anna was denied
The Note that Wordsworth heard on Duddon-side.
But Pope took up his Parable, and knit
The Woof of Wisdom with the Warp of Wit;
He trimmed the Measure on its equal Feet,
And Smoothed and fitted till the Line was neat;
He taught the Pause with due Effect to fall;
He taught the Epigram to come at Call;
He wrote —
*Friend.* His *Iliad!*
*Poet.* Well, suppose you own
You like your *Iliad* in the Prose of Bohn —
Though if you'd learn in Prose how *Homer* sang,
'Twere best to learn of Butcher and of Lang —
Suppose you say your Worst of Pope, declare
His Jewels Paste, his Nature a Parterre,
His Art but Artifice — I ask once more
Where have you seen such Artifice before?
Where have you seen a Parterre better graced,
Or Gems that glitter like his Gems of Paste?
Where can you show, among your Names of Note,
So much to copy and so much to quote?
And where, in Fine, in all our English Verse,
A Style more trenchant and a Sense more terse?
So I, that love the old Augustan Days
Or formal Courtesies and formal Phrase,
That like along the finished Line to feel
The Ruffle's Flutter and the Flash of Steel;
That like my Couplet as compact as clear;
That like my Satire sparkling though severe,
Unmixed with Bathos and unmarred by Trope,
I fling my Cap for Polish — and for Pope!
(*1888*; 1888)

## A POSTSCRIPT TO "RETALIATION"

[*After the Fourth Edition of* DR. GOLDSMITH'S RETALIATION *was printed, the Publisher received a supplementary Epitaph on the Wit and Punster* CALEB WHITEFOORD. *Though it is found appended to the later issue of the Poem, it has been suspected that* WHITEFOORD *wrote it himself. It may be that the following which has recently come to light is another forgery.*]

Here JOHNSON is laid. Have a care how you walk;
If he stir in his sleep, in his sleep he will talk.
Ye gods! how he talked! What a torrent of sound,
His hearers invaded, encompassed, and — drowned!
What a banquet of memory, fact, illustration,
In that innings-for-one that he called *conversation!*
Can't you hear his sonorous "Why no, Sir!" and "Stay, Sir!
Your premise is wrong," or "You don't see your way, Sir!"
How he silenced a prig, or a slipshod romancer!
How he pounced on a fool with a knock-me-down answer!

But peace to his slumbers! Though rough in the rind,
The heart of the giant was gentle and kind;
What signifies now, if in bouts with a friend,
When his pistol missed fire, he would use the butt-end?
If he trampled your flow'rs, like a bull in a garden,

---

66. **Phœbus,** Apollo, who presided over the Muses and artistic composition. 71. **Days . . . Elizabeth.** Cf. Tennyson's *A Dream of Fair Women*, 6-8, pages 30-31. 72. **Bards of Anna,** poets of Queen Anne's reign, 1702-14. 73. **Note . . . Duddon-side,** lyric inspiration from nature; see Wordsworth's *A Series of Sonnets on the River Duddon*, 1820. 85. **Parterre,** a garden with flower-beds formally arranged in geometric symmetry.

*A Postscript to "Retaliation." Retaliation*, 1774, is a series of mock epitaphs descriptive of Goldsmith's friends: David Garrick, Edmund Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and others. Caleb Whitefoord (1734-1810), friend of Benjamin Franklin, was secretary of the commission that drafted articles of peace after the Revolutionary War, and was prominent among the wits of the day. The unfinished epitaph on Whitefoord is said by Kearsly, the original publisher, to have come from a friend of Goldsmith.

1. **Johnson,** Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), whose virtues and peculiarities are minutely described in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, 1791. The poem contains a number of references to the *Life* (see Critical Notes).

What matter for that? — he was sure to ask pardon;
And you felt on the whole, though he'd tossed you and gored you,
It was something, at least, that he had not ignored you.
Yes! the outside was rugged. But test him within,
You found he had naught of the bear but the skin;
And for bottom and base to his *anfractuosity*,
A fund of fine feeling, good taste, generosity.
He was true to his conscience, his King, and his duty;
And he hated the Whigs, and he softened to Beauty.

Turn now to his Writings. I grant, in his tales,
That he made little fishes talk vastly like whales;
I grant that his language was rather emphatic,
Nay, even — to put the thing plainly — dogmatic;
But read him for Style — and dismiss from your thoughts,
The crowd of compilers who copied his faults —
Say, where is there English so full and so clear,
So weighty, so dignified, manly, sincere?
So strong in expression, conviction, persuasion?
So prompt to take color from place and occasion?
So widely removed from the doubtful, the tentative;
So truly — and in the best sense — argumentative?
You may talk of your Burkes and your Gibbons so clever,
But I hark back to him with a "Johnson forever!"
And I feel as I muse on his ponderous figure,
Though he's great in this age, in the next he'll grow bigger;
And still while . . . (*Cœtera Desunt.*)
(*1896;* 1896)

## RANK AND FILE

(SOUTH AFRICA, 1900)

O undistinguished Dead!
Whom the bent covers, or the rock-strewn steep
Shows to the stars, for you I mourn — I weep,
O undistinguished Dead!

None knows your name.
Blackened and blurred in the wild battle's brunt,
Hotly you fell . . . with all your wounds in front;
This is your fame! (*1900;* 1900)

## ON THE FUTURE OF POETRY

Bards of the Future! you that come
With striding march, and roll of drum,
What will your newest challenge be
To our prose-bound community?

What magic will you find to stir
The limp and languid listener?
Will it be daring and dramatic?
Will it be frankly democratic?

Will Pegasus return again
In guise of modern aeroplane,
Descending from a cloudless blue
To drop on us a bomb or two?

I know not. Far be it from me
To darken dark futurity;
Still less to render more perplexed
The last vagary, or the next.

Leave Pindus Hill to those who list,
Iconoclast or anarchist —
So be it. "They that break shall pay."
I stand upon the ancient way.

I hold it for a certain thing,
That, blank or riming, song must sing;
And more, that what is good for verse,
Need not, by dint of rime, grow worse.

I hold that they who deal in rime
Must take the standpoint of the time —

---

29-30. **read . . . faults.** Dobson, in a note on this passage, recognizes its similarity to couplets in Goldsmith's *Edwin and Angelina* and *Retaliation* and to verses by Pope and Prior. 37. **Burkes.** Edmund Burke (1729-97) was the only man whom Johnson admitted to be his match in conversation. **Gibbons.** Edward Gibbon (1737-94) was the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* and a member of Johnson's "Club." 41. **Cœtera Desunt,** the rest is missing. "On the 22d of June, 1896, these verses were read . . . at the dinner given in celebration of the five hundredth meeting of the Johnson Society of Pembroke College, Oxford. They then concluded with a couplet appropriate to that occasion. In their present place, it has been thought preferable to leave them—like Goldsmith's epitaph on Reynolds—unfinished" (Dobson's note).

*Rank and File.* This poem commemorates the unknown soldiers who fell in the Boer War (1899-1902), between Great Britain and the republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in South Africa.

2. **bent,** a wiry grass.

*On the Future of Poetry.* "These lines were suggested by a lecture on 'The Future of English Poetry,' delivered by Edmund Gosse, in June, 1913" (Alban Dobson's note).

9. **Pegasus,** the winged horse of Greek mythology, symbolic of poetic inspiration. 17. **Pindus Hill,** a mountain between Thessaly and Epirus in Greece, sacred, like Helicon and Parnassus, to Apollo and the Muses; see Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* 1, 5, 570; Virgil's tenth *Eclogue;* etc.

But not to catch the public ear,
As mountebank or pulpiteer;

That the old notes are still the new,
If the musician's touch be true —
Nor can the hand that knows its trade
Achieve the trite and ready-made;

That your first theme is Human Life,
Its hopes and fears, its love and strife —
A theme no custom can efface,
Common, but never commonplace;

For this, beyond all doubt is plain:
The Truth that pleased will please again,
And move men as in bygone years
When Hector's wife smiled through her tears.
*(1913; 1914)*

## WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT

(1840-1922)

## From *THE LOVE SONNETS OF PROTEUS*

### From Part I — To Manon

#### 2. COMPARING HER TO A FALCON

Brave as a falcon and as merciless,
With bright eyes watching still the world, thy prey,
I saw thee pass in thy lone majesty,
Untamed, unmated, high above the press.
The dull crowd gazed at thee. It could not guess
The secret of thy proud aërial way,
Or read in thy mute face the soul which lay
A prisoner there in chains of tenderness.
— Lo, thou art captured. In my hand today
I hold thee, and awhile thou deignest to be
Pleased with my jesses. I would fain beguile
My foolish heart to think thou lovest me. See,
I dare not love thee quite. A little while
And thou shalt sail back heavenwards. Woe is me!

#### 3. ON HIS FORTUNE IN LOVING HER

I did not choose thee, dearest. It was Love
That made the choice, not I. Mine eyes were blind
As a rude shepherd's who to some lone grove
His offering brings, and cares not at what shrine
He bends his knee. The gifts alone were mine;
The rest was Love's. He took me by the hand,
And fired the sacrifice, and poured the wine,
And spoke the words I might not understand.
I was unwise in all but the dear chance
Which was my fortune, and the blind desire
Which led my foolish steps to Love's abode,
And youth's sublime unreasoned prescience
Which raised an altar and inscribed in fire
Its dedication: "To the unknown god."

#### 5. ON THE POWER OF HER BEAUTY

I am light-hearted now. An hour ago
There was a tempest in my heaven, a flame
Of sullen lightning under a bent brow
And a dull muttering which breathed no name.
Now all is changed. The very winds are tame,
And the birds sing aloud from every bough,
And my heart leaps. What empire dost thou claim,
Child, o'er this earth, that nature serves thee so?
Sublime magician! Well may earth and heaven
Change at thy bidding, and the hearts of men.
Didst thou but know the power that beauty hath,
The sea should leave his bed, the rocks be riven,
And wise men, deeming chaos come again,
Should kneel before thee and conjure thy wrath.

#### 21. HIS BONDAGE TO MANON IS BROKEN

From this day forth I lead another life,
Another life! A life without a tear!
Today has ended the unequal strife;
My service and my sorrow finish here.
See, my soul cuts her cable of belief

---

40. **Hector's wife . . . tears,** a reference to the scene of tender parting between Hector and Andromache (*Iliad*, Book 6, lines 390-502); her tears were at the thought of losing Hector, her smiles from a sense of their happy love.

*The Love Sonnets of Proteus.* "The author of these sonnets, styling himself Proteus, acknowledges thereby a natural mood of change. He here lays bare what was once his heart, to the public, but what for good or evil is his heart no longer, thus closing forever his account with youth. He stands upon the threshold of middle life, and already his dreams are changed" (from the Preface to the first edition).

Proteus, in Greek myth, was a sea-god who had the power of changing his shape with great rapidity. The four parts of the sonnet-cycle deal frankly with successive love experiences, real or imagined; the first two perhaps relate to episodes during Blunt's service with the English embassy at Paris, 1864-68; the last two lead up to his marriage with the Lady Arabella Noel, granddaugther of Lord Byron, in 1870.

Blunt uses the word *sonnet* in a rather loose sense.

*Part I. To Manon.* Blunt's state of mind, in this section, recalls that of the Chevalier de Grieux, who, in the Abbé Prevost's novel (1733), loved the fascinating, selfish Manon Lescaut not wisely but too well.

*On His Fortune in Loving Her.* **14. To . . . god.** In addressing the Athenians, Paul said: "As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (*Acts*, 17:23).

And sails toward the ocean. She shall steer
Sublime henceforth o'er accidents of grief.
Her storm has rolled to a new hemisphere.
I have loved too much, too loyally, too long.
Today I am a pirate of the sea.
Let others suffer. I have suffered wrong.
Let others love, and love as tenderly.
Oh, Manon, there are women yet unborn
Shall rue thy frailty, else am I forsworn.

## From Part II — Juliet

### 33. REMINDING HER OF A PROMISE

Oh, Juliet, we have quarreled with our fate,
And fate has struck us. Wherefore do we cry?
We prayed for liberty, and now too late
Find liberty is this, to say "good-by."
The winter, which we loved not, has gone by
And spring is come. The gardens, which were bare
When we first wandered through them, you and I,
The prisoners of our vain wishes, are
Now full of golden flowers. The very lane
Down to the sea is green. The cactus hedge
We saw cut down has sprouted new again,
And swallows have their nests on the cliff's edge
Where we so often sat and dared complain
Because our joy was new, and called it pain.

### 34. THE SAME CONTINUED

Yes, spring is come, but joy, alas, is gone —
Gone ere we knew it, while our foolish eyes,
Which should have watched its motions every one
Were looking elsewhere, at the hills, the skies,
Chasing vain thoughts, as children butterflies,
Until the hour struck and the day was done,
And we looked up in passionate surprise
To find that clouds had blotted out our sun.
Our joys are gone. And what is left to us,
Who loved not even love when it was here?
What but a voice which sobs monotonous
As these sad waves upon the rocks, the dear
Fond voice which once made music with our own,
And which our hearts now ache to think upon.

### 39. FAREWELL TO JULIET

Juliet, farewell. I would not be forgiven
Even if I forgave. These words must be
The last between us two in earth or heaven,
The last and bitterest. You are henceforth free
Forever from my bitter words and me.
You shall not at my hand be further vexed
With either love, reproach, or jealousy
(So help me Heaven), in this world or the next.
Our souls are single for all time to come
And for eternity, and this farewell
Is as the trumpet note, the crack of doom,
Which heralds an eternal silence. Hell
Has no more fixed and absolute decree.
And heaven and hell may meet — yet never we.

### 53. THE SAME CONTINUED

Farewell, then. It is finished. I forgo
With this all right in you, even that of tears.
If I have spoken hardly, it will show
How much I loved you. With you disappears
A glory, a romance of many years.
What you may be henceforth I will not know.
The phantom of your presence on my fears
Is impotent at length for weal or woe.
Your past, your present, all alike must fade
In a new land of dreams where love is not.
Then kiss me and farewell. The choice is made
And we shall live to see the past forgot,
If not forgiven. See, I came to curse,
Yet stay to bless. I know not which is worse.

## From Part III — Gods and False Gods

### 55. ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

Today, all day, I rode upon the Down,
With hounds and horsemen, a brave company.
On this side in its glory lay the sea,
On that the Sussex Weald, a sea of brown.
The wind was light, and brightly the sun shone,
And still we galloped on from gorse to gorse.
And once, when checked, a thrush sang, and my horse
Pricked his quick ears as to a sound unknown.
I knew the spring was come. I knew it even
Better than all by this, that through my chase
In bush and stone and hill and sea and heaven
I seemed to see and follow still your face.
Your face my quarry was. For it I rode,
My horse a thing of wings, myself a god.

*Part II. Juliet.* This section concerns a "woman with a past" and suggests the "young waverer" Romeo, to whom Friar Laurence said, "These violent delights have violent ends" (*Romeo and Juliet*, II, 6, 9).

*Part III. Gods and False Gods.* Compare Emerson's *Give All to Love.*—"When half-gods go, The gods arrive."

*St. Valentine's Day.* 1. **Down,** a tract of open upland. 4. **Sussex Weald,** an extensive oak forest in Sussex and Kent, counties on the southern coast of England. 6. **gorse,** a spiny shrub with yellow flowers. 12. **your face,** that of the lady to whom Part III is addressed. (See note on title, page 770.)

### 56. TO ONE WHOM HE DARED NOT LOVE

As one who, in a desert wandering
Alone and faint beneath a pitiless sky,
And doubting in his heart if he shall bring
His bones back to his kindred or there die,
Finds at his feet a treasure suddenly
Such as would make him for all time a king,
And so forgets his fears and with keen eye
Falls to a-counting each new precious thing —
So was I when you told me yesterday
The tale of your dear love. Awhile I stood
Astonished and enraptured, and my heart
Began to count its treasures. Now dismay
Steals back my joy, and terror chills my blood,
And I remember only "We must part."

### 61. TO ONE EXCUSING HIS POVERTY

Ah! love, impute it not to me a sin
That my poor soul thus beggared comes to thee.
My soul a pilgrim was, in search of thine,
And met these accidents by land and sea.
The world was hard, and took its usury,
Its toll for each new night in each new inn;
And every road had robber bands to fee;
And all, even kindness, must be paid in coin.
Behold my scrip is empty, my heart bare.
I give thee nothing who my all would give.
My pilgrimage is finished, and I fare
Bare to my death, unless with thee I live.
Ah! give, love, and forgive that I am poor.
Ah! take me to thy arms and ask no more.

### 69. SIBYLLINE BOOKS

When first, a boy, at your fair knees I kneeled,
'Twas with a worthy offering. In my hand
My young life's book I held, a volume sealed,
Which none but you, I deemed, might understand.
And you I did entreat to loose the band
And read therein your own soul's destiny.
But, Tarquin-like, you turned from my demand,
Too proudly fair to find your fate in me.
When now I come, alas, what hands have turned
Those virgin pages! Some are torn away,
And some defaced, and some with passion burned,
And some besmeared with life's least holy clay.
Say, shall I offer you these pages wet
With blood and tears? And will your sorrow read
What your joy heeded not? — Unopened yet
One page remains. It still may hold a fate,
A counsel for the day of utter need.
Nay, speak, sad heart, speak quick. The hour is late.
Age threatens us. The Gaul is at the gate.

### 71. THE TWO HIGHWAYMEN

I long have had a quarrel set with Time,
Because he robbed me. Every day of life
Was wrested from me after bitter strife;
I never yet could see the sun go down
But I was angry in my heart, nor hear
The leaves fall in the wind without a tear
Over the dying summer. I have known
No truce with Time nor Time's accomplice, Death.
The fair world is the witness of a crime
Repeated every hour. For life and breath
Are sweet to all who live; and bitterly
The voices of these robbers of the heath
Sound in each ear and chill the passer-by.
— What have we done to thee, thou monstrous Time?
What have we done to Death that we must die?

## From Part IV — Vita Nova

### 91. LAUGHTER AND DEATH

There is no laughter in the natural world
Of beast or fish or bird, though no sad doubt
Of their futurity to them unfurled
Has dared to check the mirth-compelling shout.
The lion roars his solemn thunder out
To the sleeping woods. The eagle screams her cry.
Even the lark must strain a serious throat
To hurl his blest defiance at the sky.
Fear, anger, jealousy have found a voice.
Love's pain or rapture the brute bosoms swell.
Nature has symbols for her nobler joys,
Her nobler sorrows. Who had dared foretell
That only man, by some sad mockery,
Should learn to laugh who learns that he must die?

### 95. HE IS NOT A POET

I would not, if I could, be called a poet.
I have no natural love of the "chaste muse."
If aught be worth the doing I would do it;

---

*To One Excusing His Poverty.* 9. **scrip,** wallet or small bag.

*Sibylline Books.* According to legend, the Cumaean Sibyl offered to sell nine books of Grecian oracles to Tarquinius Superbus, traditional seventh king of Rome, for 300 pieces of gold. On his refusal she burned three books and offered the remaining six at the same price. Again Tarquin refused. She destroyed three more and offered the remaining three at the original price. This time Tarquin accepted.

19. **Gaul . . . gate,** the cry uttered in Rome when Brennus, the leader of the Gauls, was discovered at the gates of the city in 390 B.C. His presence was revealed by the cackling of the sacred geese in the temple.

*Part IV. Vita Nova.* The title means *New Life;* compare *Vita Nuova* (c. 1307), in which Dante recorded the varying moods of his love for Beatrice.

And others, if they will, may tell the news.
I care not for their laurels, but would choose
On the world's field to fight or fall or run.
My soul's ambition will not take excuse
To play the dial rather than the sun.
The faith I held I hold, as when a boy
I left my books for cricket-bat and gun.
The tales of poets are but scholars' themes,
In my hot youth I held it that a man
With heart to dare and stomach to enjoy
Had better work to his hand in any plan
Of any folly, so the thing were done,
Than in the noblest dreaming of mere dreams.

### 97. CHANCLEBURY RING

Say what you will, there is not in the world
A nobler sight than from this upper Down.
No rugged landscape here, no beauty hurled
From its Creator's hand as with a frown,
But a green plain on which green hills look down
Trim as a garden plot. No other hue
Can hence be seen, save here and there the brown
Of a square fallow, and the horizon's blue.
Dear checker-work of woods, the Sussex Weald!
If a name thrills me yet of things of earth,
That name is thine. How often have I fled
To thy deep hedgerows and embraced each field,
Each lag, each pasture — fields which gave me birth
And saw my youth, and which must hold me dead.

### 112. GIBRALTAR

Seven weeks of sea, and twice seven days of storm
Upon the huge Atlantic, and once more
We ride into still water and the calm
Of a sweet evening screened by either shore
Of Spain and Barbary. Our toils are o'er,
Our exile is accomplished. Once again
We look on Europe, mistress as of yore
Of the fair earth and of the hearts of men.
Aye, this is the famed rock, which Hercules
And Goth and Moor bequeathed us. At this door
England stands sentry. God! to hear the shrill
Sweet treble of her fifes upon the breeze,
And at the summons of the rock gun's roar
To see her red coats marching from the hill.
(1875)

## From *THE LOVE LYRICS OF PROTEUS*

### Song — Love Me a Little

Love me a little, love me as thou wilt,
  Whether a draft it be of passionate wine
  Poured with both hands divine,
Or just a cup of water spilt
  On dying lips and mine.
Give me the love thou wilt,
The purity, the guilt,
  So it be thine.

Love me a little. Let it be thy cheek
  With its red signals. That were dear to kiss.
  Or, if thou mayest not this,
A finger-tip my own to seek
  At nightfall when none guess.
Eyes have the wit to speak,
And sighs send messages;
  Even give less.

Love me a little. Let it be in words
  Of happy omen heralding thy choice,
  Or in a veiled sad voice
Of warning, like a frightened bird's.
  How should I not rejoice,
Though swords be crossed with swords
And discord mar love's chords
  And tears thy voice?

Love me a little. All my world thou art.
  Thy much were Heaven; thy little, Earth shall be.
  If not Eternity,
Then Time be mine, the human part,
  A single hour with thee.
Love as thou wilt and art,
With all or half a heart,
  So thou love me. (1875)

### The Stricken Hart

The stricken hart had fled the brake,
His courage spent for life's dear sake.
He came to die beside the lake.

The golden trout leaped up to view,
The moorfowl clapped his wings and crew,
The swallow brushed him as she flew.

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*97. Chanclebury Ring*, Chanctonbury Ring, a hill rising 800 feet above the Sussex plain near Steyning. There is an ancient camp on the summit

2. **Down**, a tract of open upland. 9. **Sussex Weald.** See note on *St. Valentine's Day*, line 4, page 771. 13. **lag**, a marshy meadow Sussex dialect).

*112. Gibraltar.* Gibraltar is a rocky promontory at the southern extremity of Spain, separated by the Straits of Gibraltar from Morocco, one of the Barbary States of North Africa. According to myth, Hercules placed it in its present position, as one of the pillars of Hercules, in the course of his tenth labor for King Eurystheus. It was conquered in the 5th century by the Visigoths, in the 8th century by the Moors; it is now a British possession.

*The Love Lyrics of Proteus.* Under this title, in 1892 Blunt grouped a number of lyrics that had been published previously. On the title see note on *The Love Sonnets of Proteus*, page 770.

*The Stricken Hart.* 1. **brake**, thicket.

He looked upon the glorious sun,
His blood dropped slowly on the stone,
He loved the life so nearly won,

And then he died. The ravens found
A carcass couched upon the ground,
They said their god had dealt the wound.

The Eternal Father calmly shook
One page untitled from life's book.
Few words. None ever cared to look.

Yet woe for life thus idly riven.
He blindly loved what God had given,
And love, some say, has conquered Heaven.
(1875)

### SONG — LILAC AND GOLD AND GREEN

Lilac and gold and green!
Those are the colors I love the best,
Spring's own raiment untouched and clean,
When the world is awake and yet hardly dressed,
And the stranger sun, her bridegroom shy,
Looks at her bosom and wonders why
She is so beautiful, he so blest.

Lilac and green and gold!
Those were the colors you wore today;
Robed you were in them fold on fold,
Clothed in the light of your love's delay.
And I held you thus in my arms, once only,
And wondered still, as you left me lonely,
How the world's beauty was changed to gray.

Lilac and gold and green!
I would die for the truth of those colors true!
Lilac for loyalty, gold for my queen,
And green the faith of my love for you.
Here is a posy of all the three.
My heart is with it. So think of me,
And our weeping skies shall once more be blue.
(1875)

### THE BROKEN PITCHER

Accursed be the hour of that sad day
The careless potter put his hand to thee,
And dared to fashion out of common clay
So pure a shape as thou didst seem to me.
An idle boy, when vintage was begun,
I passed and saw thy beauty for my sin,
And poured unheedingly till it was done
The red wine of my love's first gathering in.

And thou, ah! thou didst look at me and smile
To see me give with such ungrudging hand,
As taking all to thy dear heart, the while
It only fell upon the thirsty sand.

Sad pitcher, thou wast broken at the well,
Ere yet the shepherd's lip had tasted thine.
A god had lost in thee his hydromel,
As I have wasted my poor wealth of wine.

Yet, wherefore wast thou made so fair a thing?
Or why of clay, whose fabric rightly were
Of finest gold, new-fashioned for a king,
And framed by some divine artificer?

I will not curse thee, thou poor shape of clay,
That thou art other than thou seemed to be,
Yet I will break thee, that no passer may
Unthinking break another heart on thee.
(1875)

### SONG — YOU HAVE LET THE BEAUTY OF THE DAY GO OVER

You have let the beauty of the day go over,
You have let the glory of the noon go by.
Clouds from the west have gathered close and cover
All but a remnant now of our proud sky.

Dumbly the rain beats on our darkened faces.
Hushed are the woods. Alas, for us no bird
Shall sing today of pleasure in green places,
No touch shall thrill, no soul of leaves be stirred.

Why did we wait? What faith was ours in fortune?
What was our pride that fate should kneel to us?
Oh, we were fools. Love loves not to importune,
And he is silent here in this sad house.

Alas, dear love, the day for us is ended,
The pleasure of green fields, of streams, of skies.
One hour remains, one only of joy blended
With coming night. Ah, seize it ere it flies.

Draw fast the curtains. Close the door on sorrow,
Shut out the dusk. It only makes us grieve.
Here we may live a life — and then, tomorrow,
If fate still wills it, we may take our leave.
(1875)

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*The Broken Pitcher.* 15. **hydromel,** a drink compounded of honey and water.

### Song — Come with the Summer Leaves

Come with the summer leaves, love, to my grave,
And, if you doubt among the quiet dead,
Choose out that mound where greenest grasses wave
And where the flowers grow thickest and most red.

Come in the morning while the dews of night,
Which are fair Nature's tears in darkness shed,
Rim the sad petals nor are garnered quite,
Like my last hopes untimely harvested.

Come to my grave — ah, gather, love, those flowers!
Out of my heart they grow for your dear head.
These are its songs unwritten and all yours,
The love I loved you with and left unsaid.

(1875)

## THE DESOLATE CITY

Dark to me is the earth. Dark to me are the heavens.
Where is she that I loved, the woman with eyes like stars?
Desolate are the streets. Desolate is the city,
A city taken by storm, where none are left but the slain!

Sadly I rose at dawn, undid the latch of my shutters,
Thinking to let in light, but I only let in love.
Birds in the boughs were awake; I listened to their chaunting;
Each one sang to his love; only I was alone.

This, I said in my heart, is the hour of life and of pleasure.
Now each creature on earth has his joy, and lives in the sun,
Each in another's eyes finds light, the light of compassion,
This is the moment of pity, this is the moment of love.

Speak, O desolate city! Speak, O silence in sadness!
Where is she that I loved in my strength, that spoke to my soul?
Where are those passionate eyes that appealed to my eyes in passion?
Where is the mouth that kissed me, the breast I laid to my own?

Speak, thou soul of my soul, for rage in my heart is kindled.
Tell me, where didst thou flee on the day of destruction and fear?
See, my arms still enfold thee, enfolding thus all heaven,
See, my desire is fulfilled in thee, for it fills the earth.

Thus in my grief I lamented. Then turned I from the window,
Turned to the stair, and the open door, and the empty street,
Crying aloud in my grief, for there was none to chide me,
None to mock my weakness, none to behold my tears.

Groping I went, as blind. I sought her house, my belovéd's.
There I stopped at the silent door, and listened and tried the latch.
Love, I cried, dost thou slumber? This is no hour for slumber,
This is the hour of love, and love I bring in my hand.

I knew the house, with its windows barred, and its leafless fig-tree,
Climbing round by the doorstep, the only one in the street;
I knew where my hope had climbed to its goal and there encircled
All that those desolate walls once held, my belovéd's heart.

There in my grief she consoled me. She loved me when I loved not.
She put her hand in my hand, and set her lips to my lips.
She told me all her pain and showed me all her trouble.
I, like a fool, scarce heard, hardly returned her kiss.

Love, thy eyes were like torches. They changed as I beheld them.
Love, thy lips were like gems, the seal thou settest on my life.
Love, if I loved not then, behold this hour thy vengeance;
This is the fruit of thy love and thee, the unwise grown wise.

Weeping strangled my voice. I called out, but none answered;
Blindly the windows gazed back at me, dumbly the door;
She whom I love, who loved me, looked not on my yearning,
Gave me no more her hands to kiss, showed me no more her soul.

Therefore the earth is dark to me, the sunlight blackness,
Therefore I go in tears and alone, by night and day;
Therefore I find no love in heaven, no light, no beauty,
A heaven taken by storm, where none are left but the slain!

## THE OLD SQUIRE

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox;
I like the joyous morning air,
And the crowing of the cocks.

I like the calm of the early fields,
The ducks asleep by the lake,
The quiet hour which nature yields
Before mankind is awake.

I like the pheasants and feeding things
Of the unsuspicious morn;
I like the flap of the wood-pigeon's wings
As she rises from the corn.

I like the blackbird's shriek, and his rush
From the turnips as I pass by,
And the partridge hiding her head in a bush,
For her young ones cannot fly.

I like these things, and I like to ride,
When all the world is in bed,
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide,
And where the sun grows red.

The beagles at my horse heels trot
In silence after me;
There's Ruby, Roger, Diamond, Dot,
Old Slut and Margery —

A score of names well used, and dear,
The names my childhood knew;
The horn, with which I rouse their cheer,
Is the horn my father blew

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox;
The new world still is all less fair
Than the old world it mocks.

I covet not a wider range
Than these dear manors give;
I take my pleasures without change,
And as I lived I live.

I leave my neighbors to their thought;
My choice it is, and pride,
On my own lands to find my sport,
In my own fields to ride.

The hare herself no better loves
The field where she was bred,
Than I the habit of these groves,
My own inherited.

I know my quarries every one,
The meuse where she sits low;
The road she chose today was run
A hundred years ago.

The lags, the gills, the forest ways,
The hedgerows one and all,
These are the kingdoms of my chase,
And bounded by my wall;

Nor has the world a better thing,
Though one should search it round,
Than thus to live one's own sole king,
Upon one's own sole ground.

I like the hunting of the hare;
It brings me, day by day,
The memory of old days as fair,
With dead men passed away.

To these, as homeward still I ply
And pass the churchyard gate,
Where all are laid as I must lie,
I stop and raise my hat.

I like the hunting of the hare;
New sports I hold in scorn.
I like to be as my fathers were,
In the days ere I was born. (1889)

## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
## (1844–1889)

### HEAVEN — HAVEN

(A NUN TAKES THE VEIL)

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail,
And a few lilies blow.

And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the haven dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea.
(*c. 1866;* 1918)

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*The Old Squire.* 12. **corn,** wheat or other grain.

46. **meuse,** a path made in the grass by rabbits, or a hole in the hedge (Sussex dialect). 49. **lags,** marshy meadows (Sussex dialect). **gills,** rocky valleys.

*Heaven—Haven.* The poems of Hopkins were first published, from manuscript sources, by Robert Bridges in 1918. Hopkins is often obscure in phrasing and peculiar in style and rhythm. His poems show oddity and originality. See Critical Notes.

## THE HABIT OF PERFECTION

Elected Silence, sing to me
And beat upon my whorléd ear;
Pipe me to pastures still and be
The music that I care to hear.

Shape nothing, lips; be lovely-dumb —
It is the shut, the curfew sent
From there where all surrenders come
Which only makes you eloquent.

Be shelléd, eyes, with double dark
And find the uncreated light;
This ruck and reel which you remark
Coils, keeps, and teases simple sight.

Palate, the hutch of tasty lust,
Desire not to be rinsed with wine;
The can must be so sweet, the crust
So fresh that come in fasts divine!

Nostrils, your careless breath that spend
Upon the stir and keep of pride,
What relish shall the censers send
Along the sanctuary side!

O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
That want the yield of plushy sward,
But you shall walk the golden street
And you unhouse and house the Lord.

And, Poverty, be thou the bride
And now the marriage feast begun,
And lily-colored clothes provide
Your spouse not labored-at nor spun.
(*1866;* 1918)

## GOD'S GRANDEUR

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell — the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.
And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.
(*1877;* 1918)

## THE STARLIGHT NIGHT

Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!
O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air!
The bright boroughs, the quivering citadels there!
The dim woods quick with diamond wells; the elf-eyes!
The gray lawns cold where quaking gold-dew lies!
Wind-beat white-beam; airy abeles all on flare!
Flake-doves sent floating out at a farmyard scare! —
Ah well! it is a purchase and a prize.
Buy then! Bid then! — What? — Prayer, patience, alms, vows. —
Look, look! a May-mess, like on orchard boughs;
Look! March-bloom, like on mealed-with-yellow sallows. —
These are indeed the barn; within-doors house
The shocks. This piece-bright paling hides the Spouse
Christ, and the mother of Christ and all his hallows.
(*1877;* 1918)

## THE WINDHOVER

(To Christ our Lord)

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
  Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
  As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend; the hurl and gliding

---

*The Habit of Perfection.* 2. **whorléd**, having whorls. 11. **ruck and reel**, crowding and confusion. 27-28. **lily-colored . . . spun.** Cf. *Matthew*, 6:28-29.—"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

*God's Grandeur.* 3-4. **ooze of oil Crushed**, oil from crushed olives.

*The Starlight Night.* 6. **white-beam**, a small tree with leaves white on the underside. **abeles**, white poplars. 10. **May-mess**, medley, like blossoms in May. 11. **mealed . . . sallows**, willows stained with yellow pollen. 13. **shocks**, sheaves. 14. **hallows**, saints.

*The Windhover.* The windhover is a kestrel, or sparrow-hawk. Hopkins regarded this as his best poem. 3. **wimpling**, rippling.

Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird — the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valor and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it; sheer plod makes plow down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah, my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.
(*1877;* 1918)

## PIED BEAUTY

Glory be to God for dappled things —
For skies of couple-color as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced — fold, fallow, and plow;
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change —
Praise him.
(*1877;* 1918)

## INVERSNAID

This darksome burn, horseback brown,
His rollrock highroad roaring down,
In coop and in comb the fleece of his foam
Flutes and low to the lake falls home.

A windpuff-bonnet of fawn-froth
Turns and twindles over the broth
Of a pool so pitchblack, fell-frowning,
It rounds and rounds Despair to drowning.

Degged with dew, dappled with dew
Are the groins of the braes that the brook treads through,
Wiry heathpacks, flitches of fern,
And the beadbonny ash that sits over the burn.

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
Oh, let them be left, wildness and wet;
Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.
(*1881;* 1918)

## JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS
### (1840-1893)

### AN EPISODE

Vasari tells that Luca Signorelli,
The morning star of Michael Angelo,
Had but one son, a youth of seventeen summers,
Who died. That day the master at his easel
Wielded the liberal brush wherewith he painted
At Orvieto, on the Duomo's walls,
Stern forms of Death and Heaven and Hell and Judgment.
Then came they to him, and cried: "Thy son is dead,
Slain in a duel; but the bloom of life
Yet lingers round red lips and downy cheek."
Luca spoke not, but listened. Next they bore
His dead son to the silent painting-room,
And left on tiptoe son and sire alone.
Still Luca spoke and groaned not; but he raised
The wonderful dead youth, and smoothed his hair,
Washed his red wounds, and laid him on a bed,
Naked and beautiful, where rosy curtains
Shed a soft glimmer of uncertain splendor
Life-like upon the marble limbs below.

---

11. **sillion,** the ridge between two furrows of plowed land.

*Pied Beauty.* 3. **stipple,** a method in painting of applying colors in dots. 4. **chestnut-falls,** chestnuts newly stripped of their husks. 5. **plotted and pieced,** divided into fields. 6. **trim,** equipment. 7. **counter,** contrary to what is expected. **spare,** rare. 10. **whose . . . change.** Cf. *James,* 1:17.—"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

*Inversnaid.* Inversnaid is a hamlet on the east shore of Loch Lomond, Scotland. Cf. Wordsworth's *To a Highland Girl.*

1. **burn,** brook. 3. **coop,** confined place. **comb,** a narrow valley between hills (combs).

9. **Degged,** dampened. 10. **braes,** hillsides. 11. **heathpacks,** clumps of heather. **flitches,** patches.

*An Episode.* Cf. Browning's *Fra Lippo Lippi,* page 261. "The value and significance of flesh," which Lippo (line 268) struggled, against odds, to embody in his art, was the creed to which the painters of the later Italian Renaissance gave free expression.

1. **Vasari,** Giorgio Vasari, from whose *Lives of the Painters* (1550-1568) may be gleaned many anecdotes concerning artists of the Italian Renaissance. **Luca Signorelli** (c. 1442-1524), an Italian painter, famous for his powerful treatment of the nude and his interest in anatomical exactness. His figure of the crucified Christ at Cortona (painted 1502) is said to be the painting referred to in this poem. 2. **Michael Angelo,** Michaelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), Italian poet, sculptor, and painter, who owed much of his enthusiasm for glorious human bodies to the influence of Signorelli. 5-7. **painted . . . Judgment,** a reference to Signorelli's masterpiece, *The Last Judgment,* painted in the chapel of S. Brixio in the cathedral, or duomo, at Orvieto, a hill-town between Florence and Rome.

Then Luca seized his palette. Hour by hour
Silence was in the room; none durst approach.
Morn wore to noon, and noon to eve, when shyly
A little maid peeped in, and saw the painter
Painting his dead son with unerring handstroke,
Firm and dry-eyed before the lordly canvas.
(1878)

## LE JEUNE HOMME CARESSANT SA CHIMÈRE

(FOR AN INTAGLIO)

A boy of eighteen years 'mid myrtle-boughs
Lying lôve-languid on a morn of May,
Watched half-asleep his goats insatiate browse
Thin shoots of thyme and lentisk, by the spray
Of biting sea-winds bitter made and gray.
Therewith when shadows fell, his waking thought
Of love into a wondrous dream was wrought.

A woman lay beside him — so it seemed;
For on her marble shoulders, like a mist
Irradiate with tawny moonrise, gleamed
Thick silken tresses; her white woman's wrist,
Glittering with snaky gold and amethyst,
Upheld a dainty chin; and there beneath,
Her twin breasts shone like pinks that lilies wreathe.

What color were her eyes I cannot tell;
For as he gazed thereon, at times they darted
Dun rays like water in a dusky well;
Then turned to topaz; then like rubies smarted
With smoldering flames of passion tiger-hearted;
Then 'neath blue-veinéd lids swam soft and tender
With pleadings and shy timorous surrender.

Thus far a woman; but the breath that lifted
Her panting breast with long melodious sighs,
Stirred o'er her neck and hair broad wings that sifted
The perfumes of meridian Paradise;
Dusk were they, furred like velvet, gemmed with eyes
Of such dull luster as in isles afar
Night-flying moths spread to the summer star.

Music these pinions made — a sound and surge
Of pines innumerous near lisping waves —
Rustling of reeds and rushes on the verge
Of level lakes and naiad-haunted caves —
Drowned whispers of a wandering stream that laves
Deep alder-boughs and tracts of ferny grass
Bordered with azure-belled campanulas.

Potent they were; for never since her birth
With feet of woman this fair siren pressed
Sleek meadow swards or stony ways of earth;
But 'neath the silken marvel of her breast,
Displayed in sinuous length of coil and crest,
Glittered a serpent's tail, fold over fold,
In massy labyrinths of languor rolled.

Ah, me! what fascination! what faint stars
Of emerald and opal, with the shine
Of rubies intermingled, and dim bars
Of twisting turquoise and pale coralline!
What rings and rounds! what thin streaks sapphirine
Freckled that gleaming glory, like the bed
Of Eden streams with gems enamelléd!

There lurked no loathing, no soul-freezing fear,
But luxury and love these coils between.
Faint grew the boy; the siren filled his ear
With singing sweet as when the village-green
Re-echoes to the tinkling tambourine,
And feet of girls aglow with laughter glance
In myriad mazy errors of the dance.

How long he dallied with delusive joy
I know not; but thereafter never more
The peace of passionless slumber soothed the boy;
For he was stricken to the very core
With sickness of desire exceeding sore,
And through the radiance of his eyes there shone
Consuming fire too fierce to gaze upon.

He, ere he died — and they whom lips divine
Have touched, fade flower-like and cease to be —
Bade Charicles on agate carve a sign

---

*Le Jeune Homme Caressant sa Chimère.* The title means *The Young Man Cherishing His Dream.* An intaglio is a carved gem.
4. **thyme,** an aromatic herb. **lentisk,** the mastic tree, an evergreen. 25. **meridian Paradise,** central Paradise; hence the perfumes would be especially delicious.

32 **naiad,** water-nymph. 46 **coralline,** a sea-plant resembling coral. 56. **errors,** irregular movements. 66. **Charicles,** an imaginary engraver of gems.

Of his strange slumber; therefore can we see
Here in the ruddy gem's transparency
The boy, the myrtle boughs, the triple spell
Of moth and snake and white witch terrible.
(1878)

## THE FALL OF A SOUL

I sat unsphering Plato ere I slept;
Then through my dream the choir of gods was borne,
Swift as the wind and splendid as the morn,
Fronting the night of stars; behind them swept
Tempestuous darkness o'er a drear descent,
Wherein I saw a crowd of charioteers
Urging their giddy steeds with cries and cheers,
To join the choir that aye before them went.
But one there was who fell, with broken car
And horses swooning down the gulf of gloom;
Heavenward his eyes, though prescient of their doom,
Reflected glory like a falling star,
While with wild hair blown back and listless hands
Ruining he sank toward undiscovered lands.
(1878)

## HARVEST

The west is purple, and a golden globe,
Sphered with new-risen moonlight, hangs between
The skirts of evening's amethystine robe
And the round world bathed in the steady sheen.
There bending o'er a sickle bright and keen,
Rests from his long day's labor one whose eyes
Are fixed upon the large and luminous skies.

An earnest man he seems, with yellow hair,
And yellow neath his scythe-sweep are the sheaves;
Much need hath he to waste the nights with care,
Lest waking he should hear from dripping eaves
The plash of rain, or hail among thin leaves,
Or melancholy wailings of a wind,
That lays broad field and furrow waste behind.

Much need hath he the livelong day to toil,
Sweeping the golden granaries of the plain,
Until he garner all the summer's spoil,
And store his gaping barns with heavy grain;
Then will he sleep, nor heed the plash of rain,
But with gay wassail and glad winter cheer
Steel a stout heart against the coming year.
(1880)

## From IN VENICE

### 1. The Invitation to the Gondola

Come forth; for Night is falling,
The moon hangs round and red
On the verge of the violet waters,
Fronting the daylight dead.

Come forth; the liquid spaces
Of sea and sky are as one,
Where outspread angel flame-wings
Brood o'er the buried sun.

Bells call to bells from the islands,
And far-off mountains rear
Their shadowy crests in the crystal
Of cloudless atmosphere.

A breeze from the sea is wafted;
Lamp-litten Venice gleams
With her towers and domes uplifted
Like a city seen in dreams.

Her waterways are a-tremble
With melody far and wide,
Borne from the phantom galleys
That o'er the darkness glide.

There are stars in heaven, and starry
Are the wandering lights below;
Come forth! for the Night is calling,
Sea, city, and sky are aglow! (1880)

### 3. In the Small Canals

Love, felt from far, long sought, scarce found,
On thee I call;
Here where with silvery silent sound
The smooth oars fall;

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*The Fall of a Soul.* 1. **unsphering Plato.** Cf. Milton's *Il Penseroso*, lines 85-92.—

> "Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
> Be seen in some high, lonely tower,
> Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
> With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
> The spirit of Plato." (Lines 85-89)

According to neo-Platonic conceptions, the souls of the departed inhabit the concentric spheres that comprise the universe; to unsphere Plato is to summon his spirit back to earth—in this instance, by reading his philosophy.

The poem is based upon a famous passage in Plato's *Phaedrus* (246-48), in which a soul is described under the image of two-winged horses and a charioteer. The horses, in conflict, symbolize the opposing sides of man's nature, and the soul falls when the driver loses control of his horses. Cf. the legend of Phaëton, who drove the chariot of the sun for one day and fell headlong into a river when he lost control of the horses.

Here where the glimmering waterways,
Above yon stair,
Mirror one trembling lamp that plays
In twilight air!

What sighs, what sounds, O poignant Love,
Ere thou wert flown,
Quivered these darksome waves above,
In darkness known!

I dare not dream thereof; the sting
Of those dead eyes
Is too acute and close a thing
For one who dies.

Only I feel through glare and gloom,
Where yon lamp falls,
Dim specters hurrying to their doom,
And Love's voice calls:

'Twas better thus toward death to glide,
Soul-full of bliss,
Than with long life unsatisfied
Life's crown to miss. (1880)

## From *STELLA MARIS*

### 3

Venice, thou Siren of sea-cities, wrought
By mirage, built on water, stair o'er stair,
Of sunbeams and cloud-shadows, phantom-fair,
With naught of earth to mar thy sea-born thought!
Thou floating film upon the wonder-fraught
Ocean of dreams! Thou hast no dream so rare
As are thy sons and daughters, they who wear
Foam-flakes of charm from thine enchantment caught!
O dark brown eyes! O tangles of dark hair!
O heaven-blue eyes, blonde tresses where the breeze
Plays over sun-burned cheeks in sea-blown air!
Firm limbs of molded bronze! frank debonair
Smiles of deep-bosomed women! Loves that seize
Man's soul, and waft her on storm-melodies!

### 22

Give me thyself! It were as well to cry:
Give me the splendor of this night of June!
Give me yon star upon the swart lagoon
Trembling in unapproached serenity!
Our gondola, that four swift oarsmen ply,
Shoots from the darkening Lido's sandy dune,
Splits with her steel the mirrors of the moon,
Shivers the star-beams that before us fly.
Give me thyself! This prayer is even a knell,
Warning me back to mine own impotence.
Self gives not self; and souls sequestered dwell
In the dark fortalice of thought and sense,
Where, though life's prisoners call from cell to cell,
Each pines alone and may not issue thence.

### 34

How often have I now outwatched the night
Alone in this gray chamber toward the sea
Turning its deep-arcaded balcony!
Round yonder sharp acanthus-leaves the light
Comes stealing, red at first, then golden bright;
Till when the day-god in his strength and glee
Springs from the orient flood victoriously,
Each cusp is tipped and tongued with quivering white.
The islands, that were blots of purple bloom,
Now tremble in soft liquid luminous haze,
Uplifted from the sea-floor to the skies;
And dim discerned erewhile through roseate gloom,
A score of sails now stud the waterways,
Ruffling like swans afloat from paradise.
(1884)

## JOHN TODHUNTER (1839-1916)

### SONG

Bring from the craggy haunts of birch and pine,
Thou wild wind, bring
Keen forest odors from that realm of thine,
Upon thy wing!

O wind, O mighty, melancholy wind,
Blow through me, blow!

---

*Stella Maris.* Symonds explained (Preface to *Vagabunduli Libellus*, 1884) that this series of sonnets dealt with an "episode of passionate experience" in a Venetian setting. It was designed to show how a "fictitious character . . . yields to a passion which overmasters the man at first, how his acquired habits of self-analysis necessitate doubt and conflict in the very moment of fruition, and how he becomes aware of a discord not only between his own tone of feeling and that of the woman who attracted him, but also between the emotion she inspired and his inalienable ideal of love. In a moment of disillusionment he roughly rejects what he ardently desired, because he finds himself upon the verge of disloyalty to his superior nature." Cf. Blunt's *Love Sonnets of Proteus*, page 770.

*Sonnet 22.* 6. **Lido**, a sandy island in the Adriatic, separated from Venice by a lagoon. 9-10. **knell . . . impotence.** Cf. Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, lines 71-72 —

> "Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
> To toll me back from thee to my sole self."

12. **fortalice**, a stronghold.

*Sonnet 34.* 4. **acanthus-leaves**, the sculptured leaves of the acanthus, used as decoration on Corinthian capitals. 6. **day-god**, Apollo, the sun. 7. **orient**, eastern. 8. **cusp**, pointed end.

Thou blowest forgotten things into my mind,
From long ago. (1881)

### THE BLACK KNIGHT

A beaten and a baffled man,
My life drags lamely day by day,
Too young to die, too old to plan,
In failure gray.

The knights ride east, the knights ride west,
For ladyes' tokens blithe of cheer,
Each bound upon some gallant quest;
While I rust here. (1881)

### AGHADOE

There's a glade in Aghadoe, Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
There's a green and silent glade in Aghadoe,
Where we met, my love and I, Love's fair planet in the sky,
O'er that sweet and silent glade in Aghadoe.

There's a glen in Aghadoe, Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
There's a deep and secret glen in Aghadoe,
Where I hid him from the eyes of the redcoats and their spies,
That year the trouble came to Aghadoe!

Oh! my curse on one black heart in Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
On Shaun Dhu, my brother's son in Aghadoe!
When your throat fries in hell's drouth, salt the flame be in your mouth,
For the treachery you did in Aghadoe!

For they tracked me to that glen in Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
When the price was on his head in Aghadoe:
O'er the mountain, through the wood, as I stole to him with food,
Where in hiding lone he lay in Aghadoe.

But they never took him living in Aghadoe, Aghadoe;
With the bullets in his heart in Aghadoe,
There he lay, the head — my breast keeps the warmth where once 'twould rest —
Gone, to win the traitor's gold, from Aghadoe!

I walked to Mallow Town from Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
Brought his head from the gaol's gate to Aghadoe,
Then I covered him with fern, and I piled on him the cairn;
Like an Irish king he sleeps in Aghadoe.

Oh, to creep into that cairn in Aghadoe, Aghadoe!
There to rest upon his breast in Aghadoe!
Sure your dog for you could die with no truer heart than I —
Your own love cold on your cairn in Aghadoe.
(1888)

## WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY
(1849-1903)

### TO MY MOTHER

Chiming a dream by the way
With ocean's rapture and roar,
I met a maiden today
Walking alone on the shore;
Walking in maiden wise,
Modest and kind and fair,
The freshness of spring in her eyes
And the fullness of spring in her hair.

Cloud-shadow and scudding sun-burst
Were swift on the floor of the sea,
And a mad wind was romping its worst,
But what was their magic to me?
Or the charm of the midsummer skies?
I only saw she was there,
A dream of the sea in her eyes
And the kiss of the sea in her hair.

I watched her vanish in space;
She came where I walked no more;
But something had passed of her grace
To the spell of the wave and the shore;
And now, as the glad stars rise,
She comes to me, rosy and rare,
The delight of the wind in her eyes
And the hand of the wind in her hair.
(*1872;* 1888)

### From *IN HOSPITAL*

#### I. ENTER PATIENT

The morning mists still haunt the stony street;
The northern summer air is shrill and cold;
And, lo, the hospital, gray, quiet, old,
Where Life and Death like friendly chafferers meet.

---

*Aghadoe.* Aghadoe is a parish on the lakes of Killarney in southwestern Ireland.

8. **trouble,** one of numerous revolts in Ireland against English rule. 10. **Shaun Dhu,** black Shaun. 21. **Mallow Town,** a large town forty-three miles from Aghadoe.

*In Hospital.* This is a series of poems based upon impressions of the Old Infirmary, Edinburgh, where Henley was a patient for twenty months, suffering from a tubercular disease. One foot had been amputated in his youth, and it was feared that he would lose the other, but it was saved by the skill of Dr. Joseph Lister (1827-1912), originator of antiseptic surgery.

Through the loud spaciousness and drafty gloom
A small, strange child — so agéd yet so young! —
Her little arm besplinted and beslung,
Precedes me gravely to the waiting-room.
I limp behind, my confidence all gone.
The gray-haired soldier-porter waves me on,
And on I crawl, and still my spirits fail;
A tragic meanness seems so to environ
These corridors and stairs of stone and iron,
Cold, naked, clean — half-workhouse and half-jail.

### 2. WAITING

A square, squat room (a cellar on promotion),
Drab to the soul, drab to the very daylight;
Plasters astray in unnatural-looking tinware;
Scissors and lint and apothecary's jars.

Here, on a bench a skeleton would writhe from,
Angry and sore, I wait to be admitted;
Wait till my heart is lead upon my stomach,
While at their ease two dressers do their chores.

One has a probe — it feels to me a crowbar.
A small boy sniffs and shudders after bluestone.
A poor old tramp explains his poor old ulcers.
Life is (I think) a blunder and a shame.

### 4. BEFORE

Behold me waiting — waiting for the knife.
A little while, and at a leap I storm
The thick, sweet mystery of chloroform,
The drunken dark, the little death-in-life.
The gods are good to me — I have no wife,
No innocent child, to think of as I near
The fateful minute; nothing all-too dear
Unmans me for my bout of passive strife.
Yet I am tremulous and a trifle sick,
And, face to face with chance, I shrink a little;
My hopes are strong, my will is something weak.
Here comes the basket? Thank you. I am ready.
But, gentlemen my porters, life is brittle;
You carry Cæsar and his fortunes — steady!

### 5. OPERATION

You are carried in a basket,
Like a carcass from the shambles,
To the theater, a cockpit
Where they stretch you on a table.

Then they bid you close your eyelids,
And they mask you with a napkin,
And the anæsthetic reaches
Hot and subtle through your being.

And you gasp and reel and shudder
In a rushing, swaying rapture,
While the voices at your elbow
Fade — receding — fainter — farther.

Lights about you shower and tumble,
And your blood seems crystallizing —
Edged and vibrant, yet within you
Racked and hurried back and forward.

Then the lights grow fast and furious,
And you hear a noise of waters,
And you wrestle, blind and dizzy,
In an agony of effort,

Till a sudden lull accepts you,
And you sound an utter darkness . . .
And awaken . . . with a struggle . . .
On a hushed, attentive audience.

### 8. STAFF-NURSE: OLD STYLE

The great masters of the commonplace,
REMBRANDT and good SIR WALTER — only these
Could paint her all to you: experienced ease
And antique liveliness and ponderous grace;
The sweet old roses of her sunken face;
The depth and malice of her sly, gray eyes;
The broad Scots tongue that flatters, scolds, defies,
The thick Scots wit that fells you like a mace:
These thirty years has she been nursing here,
Some of them under SYME, her hero still.
Much is she worth, and even more is made of her.
Patients and students hold her very dear.
The doctors love her, tease her, use her skill.
They say "The Chief" himself is half-afraid of her.

### 10. STAFF-NURSE: NEW STYLE

Blue-eyed and bright of face but waning fast
Into the sear of virginal decay,
I view her as she enters, day by day,

---

*2. Waiting.* 10. **bluestone,** cupric sulphate, or blue vitriol, used as an emetic.

*4. Before.* 14. **You . . . fortunes,** Julius Cæsar's words, quoted by Plutarch in his *Life of Cæsar.* They were addressed, during the war with Pompey, to a boatman who had Cæsar as his passenger.

*5. Operation.* 15. **Edged,** sharp.

*8. Staff-Nurse: Old Style.* 2. **Rembrandt,** Dutch realistic painter (1606-1669). **Sir Walter,** Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), whose graphic word-paintings of Edinburgh characters, as in *The Heart of Midlothian,* were doubtless in Henley's mind. 10. **Syme,** James Syme (1799-1870), recognized as the greatest living surgeon in his day. 14. **"The Chief,"** Dr. Lister, successor to Syme as chief surgeon at the Edinburgh Infirmary.

As a sweet sunset almost overpast.
Kindly and calm, patrician to the last,
Superbly falls her gown of sober gray,
And on her chignon's elegant array
The plainest cap is somehow touched with caste.
She talks Beethoven; frowns disapprobation
At Balzac's name, sighs it at "poor George Sand's";
Knows that she has exceeding pretty hands;
Speaks Latin with a right accentuation;
And gives at need (as one who understands)
Draft, counsel, diagnosis, exhortation.

### 13. CASUALTY

As with varnish red and glistening
Dripped his hair; his feet looked rigid;
Raised, he settled stiffly sideways.
You could see his hurts were spinal.

He had fallen from an engine,
And been dragged along the metals.
It was hopeless, and they knew it;
So they covered him, and left him.

As he lay, by fits half sentient,
Inarticulately moaning,
With his stockinged soles protruded
Stark and awkward from the blankets,

To his bed there came a woman,
Stood and looked and sighed a little,
And departed without speaking,
As himself a few hours after.

I was told it was his sweetheart.
They were on the eve of marriage.
She was quiet as a statue,
But her lip was gray and writhen.

### 16. HOUSE-SURGEON

Exceeding tall, but built so well his height
Half-disappears in flow of chest and limb;
Moustache and whisker trooper-like in trim;
Frank-faced, frank-eyed, frank-hearted; always bright
And always punctual — morning, noon, and night;
Bland as a Jesuit, sober as a hymn;
Humorous, and yet without a touch of whim;
Gentle and amiable, yet full of fight.
His piety, though fresh and true in strain,
Has not yet whitewashed up his common mood
To the dead blank of his particular Schism.
Sweet, unagressive, tolerant, most humane,
Wild artists like his kindly elderhood,
And cultivate his mild Philistinism.

### 19. SCRUBBER

She's tall and gaunt, and in her hard, sad face
With flashes of the old fun's animation
There lowers the fixed and peevish resignation
Bred of a past where troubles came apace.
She tells me that her husband, ere he died,
Saw seven of their children pass away,
And never knew the little lass at play
Out on the green, in whom he's deified.
Her kin dispersed, her friends forgot and gone,
All simple faith her honest Irish mind,
Scolding her spoiled young saint, she labors on —
Telling her dreams, taking her patients' part,
Trailing her coat sometimes; and you shall find
No rougher, quainter speech, nor kinder heart.

### 25. APPARITION

Thin-legged, thin-chested, slight unspeakably,
Neat-footed and weak-fingered; in his face —
Lean, large-boned, curved of beak, and touched with race,
Bold-lipped, rich-tinted, mutable as the sea,
The brown eyes radiant with vivacity —
There shines a brilliant and romantic grace,
A spirit intense and rare, with trace on trace
Of passion and impudence and energy.
Valiant in velvet, light in ragged luck,
Most vain, most generous, sternly critical,
Buffoon and poet, lover and sensualist;
A deal of Ariel, just a streak of Puck,
Much Antony, of Hamlet most of all,
And something of the Shorter-Catechist.

### 28. DISCHARGED

Carry me out
Into the wind and the sunshine,
Into the beautiful world.

---

7. **chignon,** a roll of hair worn on the back of the head. 9. **Beethoven,** Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), Dutch musical composer; he was born in Germany and was well-established in 1872 as an old master. 10. **Balzac,** Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), French naturalistic writer of fiction. Conservative Englishwomen found his stories too frank. **George Sand,** pseudonym of Mme. Aurore Dudevant (1804-1876), French novelist, celebrated also for her romantic love affairs with the poet Musset, the composer Chopin, and others.

*16. House-Surgeon.* 11. **Schism,** sectarian creed. 14. **Philistinism,** middle-class materialism and conventionality, a term made famous by Matthew Arnold in his essay on *Culture and Anarchy*, 1869, but used previously by Carlyle and other liberal writers.

*25. Apparition.* This is an accurate sketch of Robert Louis Stevenson, who visited Henley in the hospital, 1875, and became his close friend. Stevenson dedicated his *Virginibus Puerisque* to Henley (1881).

12. **Ariel,** the airy spirit that executes Prospero's bidding in Shakespeare's *Tempest*. **Puck,** the mischievous spirit of English folklore and of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. 13. **Antony,** Marcus Antonius (83-30 B.C.), fiery orator in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, sensualist and lover in *Antony and Cleopatra* 14. **Shorter-Catechist,** an adherent to strict Calvanistic religious and ethical principles as embodied in the Shorter Catechism, compiled by the Westminster Assembly in 1646-7.

O the wonder, the spell of the streets!
The stature and strength of the horses,
The rustle and echo of footfalls,
The flat roar and rattle of wheels!
A swift tram floats huge on us . . .
It's a dream?
The smell of the mud in my nostrils
Blows brave — like a breath of the sea!

As of old,
Ambulant, undulant drapery,
Vaguely and strangely provocative,
Flutters and beckons. O yonder —
Is it? — the gleam of a stocking!
Sudden, a spire
Wedged in the mist! O the houses,
The long lines of lofty, gray houses,
Cross-hatched with shadow and light!
These are the streets . . .
Each is an avenue leading
Whither I will!

Free . . . !
Dizzy, hysterical, faint,
I sit, and the carriage rolls on with me
Into the wonderful world. (*1872-1875;* 1888)

### INVICTUS

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate;
I am the captain of my soul. (*1875;* 1888)

### THE SANDS ARE ALIVE WITH SUNSHINE

The sands are alive with sunshine,
The bathers lounge and throng,
And out in the bay a bugle
Is lilting a gallant song.

The clouds go racing eastward,
The blithe wind cannot rest,
And a shard on the shingle flashes
Like the shining soul of a jest;

While children romp in the surges,
And sweethearts wander free,
And the Firth as with laughter dimples . . .
I would it were deep over me! (*1875;* 1888)

### TO A. D.

The nightingale has a lyre of gold,
The lark's is a clarion call;
And the blackbird plays but a boxwood flute,
But I love him best of all.

For his song is all of the joy of life,
And we in the mad, spring weather,
We two have listened till he sang
Our hearts and lips together. (*1876;* 1888)

### TO K. DE M.

*Love blows as the wind blows,*
*Love blows into the heart.*
— NILE BOAT SONG.

Life in her creaking shoes
Goes, and more formal grows,
A round of calls and cues;
Love blows as the wind blows.
Blows! . . . in the quiet close
As in the roaring mart,
By ways no mortal knows
Love blows into the heart.

The stars some cadence use,
Forthright the river flows,
In order fall the dews,
Love blows as the wind blows;
Blows! . . . and what reckoning shows
The courses of his chart?
A spirit that comes and goes,
Love blows into the heart. (*1878;* 1888)

### I. M. MARGARITÆ SORORI

A late lark twitters from the quiet skies;
And from the west,
Where the sun, his day's work ended,

---

*Invictus.* The title means *Unconquered.* Cf. Swinburne's *The Garden of Proserpine,* lines 83-84, page 687.

7. **shard . . . shingle,** a fragment of pottery or glass on the beach. 11. **Firth,** a narrow arm of the sea.

*To A. D.* The poem was dedicated to Henry Austin Dobson (1840-1921), poet and essayist, who had expressed great admiration for it. See Alban Dobson, *Some Notes on Austin Dobson,* 1928, page 157.

*To K. de M.* This poem was dedicated to Henley's friend and literary protégé, Mrs. Katherine de Mattos, cousin of Robert Louis Stevenson. In some of Henley's poems, as in this one and in *To W. A.,* page 786, there is no relation between the content and the person to whom it is dedicated.

*I. M. Margaritæ Sorori.* Henley wrote this poem in memory of his wife's sister Margaret.

Lingers as in content,
There falls on the old, gray city
An influence luminous and serene,
A shining peace.

The smoke ascends
In a rosy-and-golden haze. The spires
Shine, and are changed. In the valley
Shadows rise. The lark sings on. The sun,
Closing his benediction,
Sinks, and the darkening air
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night —
Night with her train of stars
And her great gift of sleep.

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing,
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

(*1886;* 1888)

## TO W. A.

Or ever the knightly years were gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a King in Babylon
And you were a Christian Slave.

I saw, I took, I cast you by,
I bent and broke your pride.
You loved me well, or I heard them lie,
But your longing was denied.
Surely I knew that by and by
You cursed your gods and died.

And a myriad suns have set and shone
Since then upon the grave
Decreed by the King of Babylon
To her that had been his Slave.

The pride I trampled is now my scathe,
For it tramples me again.
The old resentment lasts like death,
For you love, yet you refrain.
I break my heart on your hard unfaith,
And I break my heart in vain.

Yet not for an hour do I wish undone
The deed beyond the grave,
When I was a King in Babylon
And you were a Virgin Slave.

(1884)

## ON THE WAY TO KEW

On the way to Kew,
By the river old and gray,
Where in the Long Ago
We laughed and loitered so,
I met a ghost today,
A ghost that told of you —
A ghost of low replies
And sweet inscrutable eyes,
Coming up from Richmond
As you used to do.

By the river old and gray,
The enchanted Long Ago
Murmured and smiled anew.
On the way to Kew,
March had the laugh of May,
The bare boughs looked aglow,
And old immortal words
Sang in my breast like birds,
Coming up from Richmond
As I used with you.

With the life of Long Ago
Lived my thought of you.
By the river old and gray,
Flowing his appointed way,
As I watched I knew
What is so good to know —
Not in vain, not in vain,
Shall I look for you again,
Coming up from Richmond
On the way to Kew.

(1888)

## BALLADE
## OF A TOYOKUNI COLOR-PRINT

Was I a Samurai renowned,
Two-sworded, fierce, immense of bow?
A histrion angular and profound?
A priest? a porter? — Child, although
I have forgotten clean, I know
That in the shade of Fujisan,
What time the cherry-orchards blow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

As here you loiter, flowing-gowned
And hugely sashed, with pins a-row
Your quaint head as with flamelets crowned,
Demure, inviting — even so,

---

*To W. A.* This poem was probably dedicated to William Archer (1856-1924), playwright and critic, a member of the younger literary group in which Henley and Stevenson were interested. See note on *To K. de M.*, page 785. The time indicated in line 1 is a conscious anachronism. Babylon was in ruins before the 5th century B.C.

*On the Way to Kew.* Kew, with its famous gardens, and Richmond are in the environs of London, a short distance up the Thames.

*Ballade of a Toyokuni Color-Print.* Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-1825) was a popular Japanese painter of women and actors. On the form of the poem see note on *On a Fan*, page 765.

1. **Samurai**, a member of the ancient Japanese military aristocracy. 3. **histrion**, actor. 6. **Fujisan**, Mount Fuji, which forms a characteristic background for many Japanese prints. 7. **blow**, bloom. The flowering cherry is a tree common in Japan.

When merry maids in Miyako
To feel the sweet o' the year began,
And green gardens to overflow,
I loved you once in old Japan.

Clear shine the hills; the rice-fields round
Two cranes are circling; sleepy and slow,
A blue canal the lake's blue bound
Breaks at the bamboo bridge; and lo!
Touched with the sundown's spirit and glow,
I see you turn, with flirted fan,
Against the plum-tree's bloomy snow. . .
I loved you once in old Japan!

ENVOY

Dear, 'twas a dozen lives ago;
But that I was a lucky man
The Toyokuni here will show:
I loved you — once — in old Japan. (1888)

## BALLADE OF YOUTH AND AGE

Spring at her height on a morn at prime,
Sails that laugh from a flying squall,
Pomp of harmony, rapture of rime —
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
Winter sunsets and leaves that fall,
An empty flagon, a folded page,
A tumble-down wheel, a tattered ball —
These are a type of the world of Age.

Bells that clash in a gaudy chime,
Swords that clatter in onsets tall,
The words that ring and the fames that climb —
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
Hymnals old in a dusty stall,
A bald, blind bird in a crazy cage,
The scene of a faded festival —
These are a type of the world of Age.

Hours that strut as the heirs of time,
Deeds whose rumor's a clarion-call,
Songs where the singers their souls sublime —
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
A staff that rests in a nook of wall,
A reeling battle, a rusted gage,
The chant of a nearing funeral —
These are a type of the world of Age.

ENVOY

Struggle and turmoil, revel and brawl —
Youth is the sign of them, one and all.
A smoldering hearth and a silent stage —
These are a type of the world of Age.
(1888)

## BALLADE OF DEAD ACTORS

Where are the passions they essayed,
And where are the tears they made to flow?
Where the wild humors they portrayed
For laughing worlds to see and know?
Othello's wrath and Juliet's woe?
Sir Peter's whims and Timon's gall?
And Millamant and Romeo?
Into the night go one and all.

Where are the braveries, fresh or frayed?
The plumes, the armors — friend and foe?
The cloth of gold, the rare brocade,
The mantles glittering to and fro?
The pomp, the pride, the royal show?
The cries of war and festival?
The youth, the grace, the charm, the glow?
Into the night go one and all.

The curtain falls, the play is played:
The Beggar packs beside the Beau;
The Monarch troops, and troops the Maid;
The Thunder huddles with the Snow.
Where are the revelers high and low?
The clashing swords? The lover's call?
The dancers gleaming row on row?
Into the night go one and all.

ENVOY

Prince, in one common overthrow
The Hero tumbles with the Thrall;
As dust that drives, as straws that blow,
Into the night go one and all. (1888)

## DOUBLE BALLADE OF LIFE AND FATE

Fools may pine, and sots may swill,
Cynics gibe and prophets rail,
Moralists may scourge and drill,
Preachers prose, and fainthearts quail.
Let them whine, or threat, or wail!
Till the touch of Circumstance
Down to darkness sink the scale,
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance.

What if skies be wan and chill?
What if winds be harsh and stale?
Presently the east will thrill,
And the sad and shrunken sail,
Bellying with a kindly gale,

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13. **Miyako,** a Japanese village in the northeastern part of the island of Hondo.

*Ballade of Youth and Age.* 1. **prime,** nine o'clock. 13. **stall,** bookshop.

*Ballade of Dead Actors.* 3. **humors,** character peculiarities or obsessions. 6. **Sir Peter** (**Teazle**), in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *School for Scandal,* 1777. **Timon,** the cynic in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens.* 7. **Millamant,** the heroine of Congreve's *The Way of the World,* 1700. 9. **braveries,** splendid ornaments and attire. 18. **packs,** goes out.

*Double Ballade of Life and Fate.* A double ballade consists of six stanzas instead of the three of the regular ballade. (See note on *On a Fan,* page 765.)

4. **prose,** declaim monotonously.

Bear you sunwards, while your chance
Sends you back the hopeful hail! —
"Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance."

Idle shot or coming bill,
Hapless love or broken bail,
Gulp it (never chew your pill!),
And, if Burgundy should fail,
Try the humbler pot of ale!
Over all is heaven's expanse.
Gold's to find among the shale.
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance.

Dull Sir Joskin sleeps his fill,
Good Sir Galahad seeks the Grail,
Proud Sir Pertinax flaunts his frill,
Hard Sir Aeger dints his mail;
And the while by hill and dale
Tristram's braveries, gleam and glance,
And his blithe horn tells its tale —
"Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance."

Araminta's grand and shrill,
Delia's passionate and frail,
Doris drives an earnest quill,
Athanasia takes the veil;
Wiser Phyllis o'er her pail,
At the heart of all romance
Reading, sings to Strephon's flail —
"Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance."

Every Jack must have his Jill
(Even Johnson had his Thrale!);
Forward, couples — with a will!
This, the world, is not a jail.
Hear the music, sprat and whale!
Hands across, retire, advance!
Though the doomsman's on your trail,
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance.

ENVOY

Boys and girls, at slug and snail
And their kindred look askance.
Pay your footing on the nail;
Fate's a fiddler, Life's a dance. (1888)

## WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old, and I am passed away —
Passed, and your face, your golden face, is gray —
I think whate'er the end, this dream of mine,
Comforting you, a friendly star will shine
Down the dim slope where still you stumble and stray.
So may it be: that so dead Yesterday,
No sad-eyed ghost but generous and gay,
May serve you memories like almighty wine,
When you are old!

Dear Heart, it shall be so. Under the sway
Of death the past's enormous disarray
Lies hushed and dark. Yet though there come no sign,
Live on well pleased; immortal and divine
Love shall still tend you, as God's angels may,
When you are old.

(1888)

## WHAT IS TO COME

What is to come we know not. But we know
That what has been was good — was good to show,
Better to hide, and best of all to bear.
We are the masters of the days that were;
We have lived, we have loved, we have suffered . . . even so.

Shall we not take the ebb who had the flow?
Life was our friend. Now, if it be our foe —
Dear, though it spoil and break us! — need we care
What is to come?

Let the great winds their worst and wildest blow,
Or the gold weather round us mellow slow;
We have fulfilled ourselves, and we can dare
And we can conquer, though we may not share
In the rich quiet of the afterglow
What is to come.

(1888)

## LONDON VOLUNTARIES

### 1. *Grave*

St. Margaret's bells,
Quiring their innocent, old-world canticles,
Sing in the storied air,

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20. **Burgundy**, an expensive wine, from the province of Burgundy, France. 25-36. **Joskin . . . Athanasia.** While many of these names should be associated with varying human types rather than with actual characters, some are capable of identification. Galahad is the central figure of the Grail quest in Arthurian romance; Sir Pertinax is a strutting patriot in Macklin's comedy, *The Man of the World*, 1764; Tristram is famous in Arthurian romance as a knight and the lover of Isolde; Araminta is an extravagant and snobbish woman in Vanbrugh's comedy, *The Confederacy*, 1695; Delia is the fickle and alluring lady to whom the Roman poet Tibullus addressed his poems; Sir Æger may be a character in the 15th century romance, *Sir Eger, Sir Grame, and Sir Graysteel*; Athanasia is possibly St. Anastasia, a Roman girl who entered a nunnery in the 4th century. 37-39. **Phyllis . . . Strephon**, traditional names for a pastoral shepherdess and shepherd; see Virgil's *Eclogues*, Sidney's *Arcadia*, and W. S. Gilbert's *Iolanthe*. 42. **Johnson . . . Thrale.** Mrs. Thrale, later Mrs. Piozzi, was a friend and patron of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the literary dictator of the later 18th century.

*When You Are Old.* This and the following poem are rondeaus (see note on Dobson's "*You Bid Me Try*," page 764).

*London Voluntaries. 1. Grave.* A voluntary is an organ solo; *grave* is a slow, solemn movement in music.

1. **St. Margaret's**, the parish church of Westminster, close beside Westminster Abbey. 2. **canticles**, hymns, chants.

All rosy-and-golden, as with memories
Of woods at evensong, and sands and seas
Disconsolate for that the night is nigh.
O the low, lingering lights! The large last gleam
(Hark! how those brazen choristers cry and call!)
Touching these solemn ancientries, and there,
The silent River ranging tide-mark high
And the callow, gray-faced Hospital,
With the strange glimmer and glamour of a dream!
The Sabbath peace is in the slumbrous trees,
And from the wistful, the fast-widowing sky
(Hark! how those plangent comforters call and cry!)
Falls as in August plots late roseleaves fall.
The sober Sabbath stir —
Leisurely voices, desultory feet! —
Comes from the dry, dust-colored street,
Where in their summer frocks the girls go by,
And sweethearts lean and loiter and confer,
Just as they did an hundred years ago,
Just as an hundred years to come they will —
When you and I, dear love, lie lost and low,
And sweet-throats none our welkin shall fulfill,
Nor any sunset face serene and slow;
But, being dead, we shall not grieve to die.

### 2. *Andante con moto*

Forth from the dust and din,
The crush, the heat, the many-spotted glare,
The odor and sense of life and lust aflare,
The wrangle and jangle of unrests,
Let us take horse, dear heart, take horse and win —
As from swart August to the green lap of May —
To quietness and the fresh and fragrant breasts
Of the still, delicious night, not yet aware
In any of her innumerable nests
Of that first sudden plash of dawn,
Clear, sapphirine, luminous, large,
Which tells that soon the flowing springs of day
In deep and ever deeper eddies drawn
Forward and up, in wider and wider way,
Shall float the sands, and brim the shores,
On this our lith of the world, as round it roars
And spins into the outlook of the sun
(The Lord's first gift, the Lord's especial charge),
With light, with living light, from marge to marge
Until the course He set and staked be run.

Through street and square, through square and street,
Each with his home-grown quality of dark
And violated silence, loud and fleet,
Waylaid by a merry ghost at every lamp,
The hansom wheels and plunges. Hark, O hark,
Sweet, how the old mare's bit and chain
Ring back a rough refrain
Upon the marked and cheerful tramp
Of her four shoes! Here is the Park,
And, oh, the languid midsummer wafts adust,
The tired midsummer blooms!
O the mysterious distances, the glooms
Romantic, the august
And solemn shapes! At night this City of Trees
Turns to a tryst of vague and strange
And monstrous Majesties,
Let loose from some dim underworld to range
These terrene vistas till their twilight sets;
When, dispossessed of wonderfulness, they stand
Beggared and common, plain to all the land
For stooks of leaves! And lo! the Wizard Hour,
His silent, shining sorcery winged with power!
Still, still the streets, between their carcanets
Of linking gold, are avenues of sleep.
But see how gable ends and parapets
In gradual beauty and significance
Emerge! And did you hear
That little twitter-and-cheep,
Breaking inordinately loud and clear
On this still, spectral, exquisite atmosphere?
'Tis a first nest at matins! And behold
A rakehell cat — how furtive and acold!
A spent witch homing from some infamous dance —
Obscene, quick-trotting, see her tip and fade
Through shadowy railings into a pit of shade!
And now! a little wind and shy,
The smell of ships (that earnest of romance),
A sense of space and water, and thereby
A lamplit bridge touching the troubled sky,
And look, O look! a tangle of silver gleams
And dusky lights, our River and all his dreams,
His dreams that never save in our deaths can die.

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10. **River,** the Thames. 11. **Hospital,** Chelsea Hospital, a short distance up the Thames from St. Margaret's. 15. **plangent,** resounding. **comforters,** the bells of St. Margaret's.

2. *Andante con moto,* with energy or emotion, a musical movement not so slow as *andante* but less rapid than *allegretto.*

16. **lith,** limb, section.

38. **terrene,** earthly. 41. **stooks,** bundles. 43. **carcanets,** golden collars set with jewels—referring to the rows of street-lamps. 51. **matins,** morning songs.

What miracle is happening in the air,
Charging the very texture of the gray
With something luminous and rare?
The night goes out like an ill-parceled fire,
And, as one lights a candle, it is day.
The extinguisher, that perks it like a spire
On the little formal church, is not yet green
Across the water; but the housetops nigher,
The corner-lines, the chimneys — look how clean,
How new, how naked! See the batch of boats,
Here at the stairs, washed in the freshsprung beam!
And those are barges that were goblin floats,
Black, hag-steered, fraught with devilry and dream!
And in the piles the water frolics clear,
The ripples into loose rings wander and flee,
And we — we can behold that could but hear
The ancient River singing as he goes,
New-mailed in morning, to the ancient Sea.
The gas burns lank and jaded in its glass;
The old Ruffian soon shall yawn himself awake,
And light his pipe, and shoulder his tools, and take
His hobnailed way to work!

Let us too pass —
Pass ere the sun leaps and your shadow shows —
Through these long, blindfold rows
Of casements staring blind to right and left,
Each with his gaze turned inward on some piece
Of life in death's own likeness — Life bereft
Of living looks as by the Great Release —
Pass to an exquisite night's more exquisite close!

Reach upon reach of burial — so they feel,
These colonies of dreams! And as we steal
Homeward together, but for the buxom breeze,
Fitfully frolicking to heel
With news of dawn-drenched woods and tumbling seas,
We might — thus awed, thus lonely that we are —
Be wandering some dispeopled star,
Some world of memories and unbroken graves,
So broods the abounding Silence near and far —
Till even your footfall craves
Forgiveness of the majesty it braves.

### 3. *Scherzando*

Down through the ancient Strand
The spirit of October, mild and boon
And sauntering, takes his way
This golden end of afternoon,
As though the corn stood yellow in all the land,
And the ripe apples dropped to the harvest-moon.

Lo! the round sun, half-down the western slope —
Seen as along an unglazed telescope —
Lingers and lolls, loath to be done with day:
Gifting the long, lean, lanky street
And its abounding confluences of being
With aspects generous and bland;
Making a thousand harnesses to shine
As with new ore from some enchanted mine,
And every horse's coat so full of sheen
He looks new-tailored, and every 'bus feels clean,
And never a hansom but is worth the feeing;
And every jeweler within the pale
Offers a real Arabian Night for sale;
And even the roar
Of the strong streams of toil, that pause and pour
Eastward and westward, sounds suffused —
Seems as it were bemused
And blurred, and like the speech
Of lazy seas on a lotus-haunted beach —
With this enchanted lustrousness,
This mellow magic, that (as a man's caress
Brings back to some faded face, beloved before,
A heavenly shadow of the grace it wore
Ere the poor eyes were minded to beseech)
Old things transfigures, and you hail and bless
Their looks of long-lapsed loveliness once more;
Till Clement's, angular and cold and staid,
Gleams forth in glamour's very stuffs arrayed;
And Bride's, her aëry, unsubstantial charm
Through flight on flight of springing, soaring stone
Grown flushed and warm,
Laughs into life full-mooded and fresh-blown;
And the high majesty of Paul's

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66. **ill-parceled,** poorly divided or built.

3. *Scherzando,* a musical movement, light and happy.
1. **Strand.** The direct way from St. Paul's Cathedral to Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square comprises Ludgate Hill, Fleet Street, and the Strand, each a continuation of the other. The Strand was anciently a country road linking London with the village of Westminster. 2. **boon,** good; cf. French *bon.* 8. **unglazed telescope,** a tube without lenses. 23. **bemused,** in a trance. 24. **lotus-haunted,** covered with lotus trees, the fruit of which causes dreaminess and forgetfulness. (See Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters,* page 28.) 33. **Clement's,** St. Clement Danes, a church midway of the Strand; it was built in 1681 by Sir Christopher Wren. 35. **Bride's,** a Wren church, just off Fleet Street, with a tall spire (226 feet). 39. **Paul's,** St. Paul's Cathedral, at the head of Ludgate Hill, built (1675-1710) in the Renaissance style by Wren.

Uplifts a voice of living light, and calls —
Calls to his millions to behold and see
How goodly this his London Town can be!

For earth and sky and air
Are golden everywhere,
And golden with a gold so suave and fine
The looking on it lifts the heart like wine.
Trafalgar Square
(The fountains volleying golden glaze)
Shines like an angel-market. High aloft
Over his couchant Lions, in a haze
Shimmering and bland and soft,
A dust of chrysoprase,
Our Sailor takes the golden gaze
Of the saluting sun, and flames superb,
As once he flamed it on his ocean round.
The dingy dreariness of the picture-place,
Turned very nearly bright,
Takes on a luminous transiency of grace,
And shows no more a scandal to the ground.
The very blind man pottering on the curb
Among the posies and the ostrich feathers
And the rude voices touched with all the weathers
Of the long, varying year,
Shares in the universal alms of light.
The windows, with their fleeting, flickering fires,
The height and spread of frontage shining sheer,
The quiring signs, the rejoicing roofs and spires —
'Tis El Dorado — El Dorado plain,
The Golden City! And when a girl goes by,
Look! as she turns her glancing head,
A call of gold is floated from her ear!
Golden, all golden! In a golden glory,
Long-lapsing down a golden coasted sky,
The day not dies, but seems
Dispersed in wafts and drifts of gold, and shed
Upon a past of golden song and story
And memories of gold and golden dreams.

### 4. *Largo e mesto*

Out of the poisonous East,
Over a continent of blight,
Like a maleficent Influence released
From the most squalid cellarage of hell,
The Wind-Fiend, the abominable —
The Hangman Wind that tortures temper and light —
Comes slouching, sullen and obscene,
Hard on the skirts of the embittered night;
And in a cloud unclean
Of excremental humors, roused to strife
By the operation of some ruinous change,
Wherever his evil mandate run and range,
Into a dire intensity of life,
A craftsman at his bench, he settles down
To the grim job of throttling London Town.

So, by a jealous lightlessness beset
That might have oppressed the dragons of old time
Crunching and groping in the abysmal slime,
A cave of cutthroat thoughts and villainous dreams,
Hag-rid and crying with cold and dirt and wet,
The afflicted City, prone from mark to mark
In shameful occultation, seems
A nightmare labyrinthine, dim and drifting,
With wavering gulfs and antic heights, and shifting,
Rent in the stuff of a material dark,
Wherein the lamplight, scattered and sick and pale,
Shows like the leper's living blotch of bale —
Uncoiling monstrous into street on street
Paven with perils, teeming with mischance,
Where man and beast go blindfold and in dread,
Working with oaths and threats and faltering feet
Somewhither in the hideousness ahead;
Working through wicked airs and deadly dews
That make the laden robber grin askance
At the good places in his black romance,
And the poor, loitering harlot rather choose
Go pinched and pined to bed
Than lurk and shiver and curse her wretched way
From arch to arch, scouting some threepenny prey.

Forgot his dawns and far-flushed afterglows,
His green garlands and windy eyots forgot,
The old Father-River flows,
His watchfires cores of menace in the gloom,
As he came oozing from the Pit, and bore,
Sunk in his filthily transfigured sides,
Shoals of dishonored dead to tumble and rot
In the squalor of the universal shore —
His voices sounding through the gruesome air
As from the Ferry where the Boat of Doom
With her blaspheming cargo reels and rides,
The while his children, the brave ships,

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47. **Trafalgar Square,** an open square, just north of Charing Cross, containing fountains fed by artesian wells and a column surmounted by a statue of Lord Nelson, famous British admiral (1778-1805), and guarded by four bronze lions, the work of Sir Edward Landseer. 52. **dust of chrysoprase,** a greenish haze as if composed of particles of green limestone. 67. **quiring signs,** signs that unite in proclaiming wares. 68. **El Dorado,** the legendary golden city sought by the Spanish conquerors of America.
4. *Largo e mesto,* slowly and sadly.

22. **occultation,** concealment. 27. **bale,** sorrow, death. 41. **eyots,** small islands. 42. **Father-River,** the Thames. 49. **Ferry . . . Doom,** the boat in which Charon, the ferryman of Hades, conveys the dead across the river Styx.

No more adventurous and fair,
Nor tripping it light of heel as homebound brides,
But infamously enchanted,
Huddle together in the foul eclipse,
Or feel their course by inches desperately,
As through a tangle of alleys murder-haunted,
From sinister reach to reach out—out—to sea.

And Death the while—
Death with his well-worn, lean, professional smile,
Death in his threadbare working trim—
Comes to your bedside, unannounced and bland,
And with expert, inevitable hand
Feels at your windpipe, fingers you in the lung,
Or flicks the clot well into the laboring heart,
Thus signifying unto old and young,
However hard of mouth or wild of whim,
’Tis time—’tis time by his ancient watch—to part
From books and women and talk and drink and art.
And you go humbly after him
To a mean suburban lodging—on the way
To what or where
Not Death, who is old and very wise, can say;
And you—how should you care
So long as, unreclaimed of hell,
The Wind-Fiend, the insufferable,
Thus vicious and thus patient, sits him down
To the black job of burking London Town?

### 5. *Allegro mæstoso*

Spring winds that blow
As over leagues of myrtle-blooms and may;
Bevies of spring clouds trooping slow,
Like matrons heavy bosomed and aglow
With the mild and placid price of increase! Nay,
What makes this insolent and comely stream
Of appetence, this freshet of desire
(Milk from the wild breasts of the willful Day!),
Down Piccadilly dance and murmur and gleam
In genial wave on wave and gyre on gyre?
Why does that nymph unparalleled splash and churn
The wealth of her enchanted urn
Till, over-billowing all between
Her cheerful margents, gray and living green,
It floats and wanders, glittering and fleeing,
An estuary of the joy of being?
Why should the lovely leafage of the Park
Touch to an ecstasy the act of seeing?
—Sure, sure my paramour, my Bride of Brides,
Lingering and flushed, mysteriously abides
In some dim, eye-proof angle of odorous dark,
Some smiling nook of green-and-golden shade,
In the divine conviction robed and crowned
The globe fulfills his immemorial round
But as the marrying-place of all things made!

There is no man, this deifying day,
But feels the primal blessing in his blood.
There is no woman but disdains—
The sacred impulse of the May
Brightening like sex made sunshine through her veins—
To vail the ensigns of her womanhood.
None but, rejoicing, flaunts them as she goes,
Bounteous in looks of her delicious best,
On her inviolable quest;
These with their hopes, with their sweet secrets those,
But all desirable and frankly fair,
As each were keeping some most prosperous tryst,
And in the knowledge went imparadised!
For look! a magical influence everywhere,
Look how the liberal and transfiguring air
Washes this inn of memorable meetings,
This center of ravishments and gracious greetings,
Till, through its jocund loveliness of length
A tidal-race of lust from shore to shore,
A brimming reach of beauty met with strength,
It shines and sounds like some miraculous dream,
Some vision multitudinous and agleam,
Of happiness as it shall be evermore!

Praise God for giving
Through this His messenger among the days
His word the life He gave is thrice-worth living!
For Pan, the bountiful, imperious Pan—
Not dead, not dead, as impotent dreamers feigned,
But the gay genius of a million Mays
Renewing his beneficent endeavor!—
Still reigns and triumphs, as he hath triumphed and reigned
Since in the dim blue dawn of time
The universal ebb-and-flow began,
To sound his ancient music, and prevails,
By the persuasion of his mighty rime,

---

58. **reach,** the distance sailed on a single tack. 78. **burking,** murdering. The word is derived from William Burke, of Edinburgh, who was executed for smothering persons in order to sell their bodies for dissection.

5. *Allegro mæstoso*, quick—but with dignity.

2. **may,** hawthorn. 7. **appetence,** longing. 9. **Piccadilly,** a street in the fashionable district of London, lined with hotels, shops, and clubs. 10. **gyre,** whirl. 11. **nymph,** a statue of a nymph spouting water.

17. **Park,** Hyde Park, at the end of Piccadilly. 31. **vail,** lower. 41-42. **inn . . . greetings,** Piccadilly. 45. **reach,** extent. 52-53. **Pan . . . dead.** See Mrs. Browning's *The Dead Pan*, page 362.

Here in this radiant and immortal street
Lavishly and omnipotently as ever
In the open hills, the undissembling dales,
The laughing-places of the juvenile earth.
For lo! the wills of man and woman meet,
Meet and are moved, each unto each endeared,
As once in Eden's prodigal bowers befell,
To share his shameless, elemental mirth
In one great act of faith; while deep and strong,
Incomparably nerved and cheered,
The enormous heart of London joys to beat
To the measures of his rough, majestic song;
The lewd, perennial, overmastering spell
That keeps the rolling universe ensphered,
And life, and all for which life lives to long,
Wanton and wondrous and forever well.
(*1890-1892;* 1892)

## PROLOGUE TO *RHYMES AND RHYTHMS*

Something is dead . . .
The grace of sunset solitudes, the march
Of the solitary moon, the pomp and power
Of round on round of shining soldier-stars
Patrolling space, the bounties of the sun —
Sovran, tremendous, unimaginable —
The multitudinous friendliness of the sea,
Possess no more — no more.

Something is dead . . .
The autumn rain-rot deeper and wider soaks
And spreads, the burden of winter heavier weighs,
His melancholy close and closer yet
Cleaves, and those incantations of the spring
That made the heart a center of miracles
Grow formal, and the wonder-working hours
Arise no more — no more.

Something is dead . . .
'Tis time to creep in close about the fire
And tell gray tales of what we were, and dream
Old dreams and faded, and as we may rejoice
In the young life that round us leaps and laughs,
A fountain in the sunshine, in the pride
Of God's best gift to us twain returns,
Dear heart, no more — no more. (1892)

## WHERE FORLORN SUNSETS FLARE AND FADE

Where forlorn sunsets flare and fade
On desolate sea and lonely sand,
Out of the silence and the shade
What is the voice of strange command
Calling you still, as friend calls friend
With love that cannot brook delay,
To rise and follow the ways that wend
Over the hills and far away?

Hark to the city, street on street
A roaring reach of death and life,
Of vortices that clash and fleet
And ruin in appointed strife,
Hark to it calling, calling clear,
Calling until you cannot stay
From dearer things than your own most dear
Over the hills and far away.

Out of the sound of the ebb-and-flow,
Out of the sight of lamp and star,
It calls you where the good winds blow,
And the unchanging meadows are —
From faded hopes and hopes agleam,
It calls you, calls you night and day
Beyond the dark into the dream
Over the hills and far away. (1892)

## MIDSUMMER MIDNIGHT SKIES

Midsummer midnight skies,
Midsummer midnight influences and airs,
The shining, sensitive silver of the sea
Touched with the strange-hued blazonings of dawn;
And all so solemnly still I seem to hear
The breathing of Life and Death,
The secular Accomplices,
Renewing the visible miracle of the world.

The wistful stars
Shine like good memories. The young morning wind
Blows full of unforgotten hours
As over a region of roses. Life and Death
Sound on — sound on . . . And the night magical,
Troubled yet comforting, thrills
As if the Enchanted Castle at the heart
Of the wood's dark wonderment
Swung wide his valves, and filled the dim sea-banks
With exquisite visitants:
Words fiery-hearted yet, dreams and desires
With living looks intolerable, regrets
Whose voice comes as the voice of an only child
Heard from the grave: shapes of a Might-Have-Been —
Beautiful, miserable, distraught —
The Law no man may baffle denied and slew.

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*Rhymes and Rhythms.* This is a collection of lyrics published in 1892.

8. **Over . . . away.** See Stevenson's *A Song of the Road,* 4, page 806. 11. **fleet,** rush.

The spell-bound ships stand as at gaze
To let the marvel by. The gray road glooms . . .
Glimmers . . . goes out . . . and there, O there where it fades,
What grace, what glamour, what wild will,
Transfigure the shadows? Whose,
Heart of my heart, Soul of my soul, but yours?

Ghosts — ghosts — the sapphirine air
Teems with them even to the gleaming ends
Of the wild day-spring! Ghosts,
Everywhere — everywhere — till I and you
At last — dear love, at last! —
Are in the dreaming, even as Life and Death
Twin-ministers of the unoriginal Will.

(1892)

## TO JAMES McNEILL WHISTLER

Under a stagnant sky,
Gloom out of gloom uncoiling into gloom,
The River, jaded and forlorn,
Welters and wanders wearily — wretchedly — on;
Yet in and out among the ribs
Of the old skeleton bridge, as in the piles
Of some dead lake-built city, full of skulls,
Worm-worn, rat-riddled, moldy with memories,
Lingers to babble to a broken tune
(Once, O the unvoiced music of my heart!)
So melancholy a soliloquy
It sounds as it might tell
The secret of the unending grief-in-grain,
The terror of Time and Change and Death,
That wastes this floating, transitory world.

What of the incantation
That forced the huddled shapes on yonder shore
To take and wear the night
Like a material majesty?
That touched the shafts of wavering fire
About this miserable welter and wash
(River, O River of Journeys, River of Dreams!)
Into long, shining signals from the panes
Of an enchanted pleasure-house,
Where life and life might live life lost in life
For ever and evermore?
O Death! O Change! O Time!
Without you, oh, the insufferable eyes
Of these poor Might-Have-Beens,
These fatuous, ineffectual Yesterdays!

(1892)

## FRESH FROM HIS FASTNESSES

Fresh from his fastnesses
Wholesome and spacious,
The North Wind, the mad huntsman,
Halloas on his white hounds
Over the gray, roaring
Reaches and ridges,
The forest of ocean,
The chace of the world.
Hark to the peal
Of the pack in full cry,
As he thongs them before him,
Swarming voluminous,
Weltering, wide-wallowing,
Till in a ruining
Chaos of energy,
Hurled on their quarry,
They crash into foam!

Old Indefatigable,
Time's right-hand man, the sea
Laughs as in joy
From his millions of wrinkles;
Laughs that his destiny,
Great with the greatness
Of triumphing order,
Shows as a dwarf
By the strength of his heart
And the might of his hands.

Master of masters,
O maker of heroes,
Thunder the brave,
Irresistible message:
"Life is worth Living
Through every grain of it,
From the foundations
To the last edge
Of the cornerstone, death."

(1892)

## SPACE AND DREAD AND THE DARK

Space and dread and the dark —
Over a livid stretch of sky
Cloud-monsters crawling, like a funeral train
Of huge, primeval presences
Stooping beneath the weight
Of some enormous, rudimentary grief;
While in the haunting loneliness
The far sea waits and wanders with a sound

---

*To James McNeill Whistler.* Whistler was a noted painter and etcher (1834-1903). He was born in America, but lived most of his life in Chelsea, a district of London on the bank of the Thames; there he made a series of paintings and etchings of the river, done at twilight or at night, that show it at its loveliest.

7. **dead . . . city,** a reference to the prehistoric lake-cities built on piles to protect the inhabitants from their enemies. 13. **grief-in-grain,** unfading grief. Grain is a cochineal dye; cloth dyed in grain is unfading.

*Fresh from His Fastnesses.* 8. **chace,** hunting ground (obsolete form of *chase*).

As of the trailing skirts of Destiny,
Passing unseen
To some immitigable end
With her gray henchman, Death.

What larve, what specter is this
Thrilling the wilderness to life
As with the bodily shape of Fear?
What but a desperate sense,
A strong foreboding of those dim
Interminable continents, forlorn
And many-silenced, in a dusk
Inviolable utterly, and dead
As the poor dead it huddles and swarms and styes
In hugger-mugger through eternity?

Life — life — let there be life!
Better a thousand times the roaring hours
When wave and wind,
Like the Arch-Murderer in flight
From the Avenger at his heel,
Storms through the desolate fastnesses
And wild waste places of the world!

Life — give me life until the end,
That at the very top of being,
The battle-spirit shouting in my blood,
Out of the reddest hell of the fight
I may be snatched and flung
Into the everlasting lull,
The immortal, incommunicable dream. (1892)

## ENGLAND, MY ENGLAND

What have I done for you,
England, my England?
What is there I would not do,
England, my own?
With your glorious eyes austere,
As the Lord were walking near,
Whispering terrible things and dear
As the Song on your bugles blown,
England —
Round the world on your bugles blown!

Where shall the watchful Sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?
When shall he rejoice again
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England —
Down the years on your bugles blown?

Ever the faith endures,
England, my England —
"Take and break us; we are yours,
England, my own!
Life is good, and joy runs high
Between English earth and sky;
Death is death; but we shall die
To the Song on your bugles blown,
England —
To the stars on your bugles blown!"

They call you proud and hard,
England, my England;
You with worlds to watch and ward,
England, my own!
You whose mailed hand keeps the keys
Of such teeming destinies
You could know nor dread nor ease
Were the Song on your bugles blown,
England —
Round the Pit on your bugles blown!

Mother of Ships whose might,
England, my England,
Is the fierce old Sea's delight,
England, my own,
Chosen daughter of the Lord,
Spouse-in-Chief of the ancient Sword,
There's the menace of the Word
In the Song on your bugles blown,
England —
Out of heaven on your bugles blown!
(1892)

## ANDREW LANG (1844-1912)

### TWILIGHT ON TWEED

Three crests against the saffron sky,
Beyond the purple plain,
The kind remembered melody
Of Tweed once more again.

Wan water from the border hills,
Dear voice from the old years,
Thy distant music lulls and stills,
And moves to quiet tears.

Like a loved ghost thy fabled flood
Fleets through the dusky land;
Where Scott, come home to die, has stood,
My feet returning stand.

A mist of memory broods and floats,
The border waters flow;

---

*Space and Dread and the Dark.* 13. **larve,** ghost.

*Twilight on Tweed.* The Tweed River flows through the border country of Scotland and England, and hence is associated with many stirring folk-ballads. Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott, was on the bank of the Tweed. In 1831 Scott was induced to cruise in the Mediterranean in order to regain his health, but when he felt himself dying, he insisted upon being taken home to Abbotsford.

1. **Three crests,** three peaks near Abbotsford; the highest of these is Eildon Hill (line 21).

The air is full of ballad notes,
Borne out of long ago.

Old songs that sung themselves to me,
Sweet through a boy's day-dream,
While trout below the blossomed tree
Plashed in the golden stream.

. . . . .

Twilight, and Tweed, and Eildon Hill,
Fair and too fair you be;
You tell me that the voice is still
That should have welcomed me. (1872)

## BALLADE OF BLUE CHINA

There's a joy without canker or cark,
There's a pleasure eternally new,
'Tis to gloat on the glaze and the mark
Of china that's ancient and blue;
Unchipped, all the centuries through
It has passed, since the chime of it rang,
And they fashioned it, figure and hue,
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

These dragons (their tails, you remark,
Into bunches of gillyflowers grew) —
When Noah came out of the ark,
Did these lie in wait for his crew?
They snorted, they snapped, and they slew,
They were mighty of fin and of fang,
And their portraits Celestials drew
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

Here's a pot with a cot in a park,
In a park where the peach-blossoms blew;
Where the lovers eloped in the dark,
Lived, died, and were changed into two
Bright birds that eternally flew
Through the boughs of the may, as they sang;
'Tis a tale was undoubtedly true
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.

ENVOY

Come, snarl at my ecstasies, do!
Kind critic, your "tongue has a tang";
But — a sage never heeded a shrew
In the reign of the Emperor Hwang.
(1883)

## BALLADE OF HIS CHOICE OF A SEPULCHER

Here I'd come when weariest!
Here the breast
Of the Windberg's tufted over
Deep with bracken; here his crest
Takes the west,
Where the wide-winged hawk doth hover.

Silent here are lark and plover;
In the cover
Deep below, the cushat best
Loves his mate, and croons above her
O'er their nest,
Where the wide-winged hawk doth hover.

Bring me here, life's tired-out guest,
To the blest
Bed that waits the weary rover —
Here should failure be confessed;
Ends my quest,
Where the wide-winged hawk doth hover!

ENVOY

Friend, or stranger kind, or lover,
Ah, fulfill a last behest,
Let me rest
Where the wide-winged hawk doth hover!
(1883)

## THE ODYSSEY

As one that for a weary space has lain
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Ææan isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine;
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again —
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers;
And, through the music of the languid hours,

---

*Ballade of Blue China.* For a definition of *ballade* see note on Swinburne's *A Ballad of Dreamland*, page 713. Cf. also Dobson's *On a Nankin Plate*, page 766.

1. **cark,** anxiety. 8. **Emperor Hwang,** a mythical emperor, c. 2700 B.C., during whose reign the art of pottery-making is fabled to have been established in China.

19-21. **lovers . . . flew.** According to the story told to explain the picture common on blue-ware of the willow pattern, Li-chi, the daughter of a mandarin, eloped with Chang, her father's secretary; the two lovers were pursued, beaten, but saved from death by the gods, who changed them into turtle-doves. Neither the willow pattern nor the story is especially oriental. 22. **may.** The Chinese plum, pictured frequently in blue-ware, was taken by Europeans to be hawthorne, or may. 26. **"tongue . . . tang."** From Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, II, 2, 52.—

"But none of us cared for Kate;
For she had a tongue with a tang."

*Ballade of His Choice of a Sepulcher.* 3. **Windberg,** a mountain in the border district of Scotland, fifteen miles south of Selkirk, Lang's birthplace. 4. **bracken,** fern. 9. **cushat,** ring-dove.

*The Odyssey.* Lang was greatly interested in Homer. He translated the *Odyssey*, and wrote several books on Homeric themes.

2. **Circe,** a sorceress, living in the isle of Ææa who with an enchanted wine changed men into hogs (*Odyssey*, Book 10). 3. **pale of Proserpine.** See Swinburne's *The Garden of Proserpine*, and note, page 687. 11. **close,** enclosed garden.

They hear like ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.
(1883)

## SCYTHE SONG

Mowers, weary and brown, and blithe,
What is the word methinks ye know —
Endless over-word that the scythe
Sings to the blades of the grass below?
Scythes that swing in the grass and clover,
Something, still, they say as they pass;
What is the word that, over and over,
Sings the scythe to the flowers and grass?

*Hush, ah hush*, the scythes are saying,
*Hush, and heed not, and fall asleep;*
*Hush*, they say to the grasses swaying;
*Hush*, they sing to the clover deep!
*Hush* — 'tis the lullaby Time is singing —
*Hush, and heed not, for all things pass;*
*Hush, ah hush!* and the scythes are swinging
Over the clover, over the grass! (1888)

## HERODOTUS IN EGYPT

He left the land of youth, he left the young,
The smiling gods of Greece; he passed the isle
Where Jason loitered, and where Sappho sung;
He sought the secret-founted wave of Nile,
And of their old world, dead a weary while,
Heard the priests murmur in their mystic tongue,
And through the fanes went voyaging, among
Dark tribes that worshiped Cat and Crocodile.
He learned the tales of death Divine and birth,
Strange loves of Hawk and Serpent, Sky and Earth,
The marriage, and the slaying of the Sun.
The shrines of gods and beasts he wandered through,
And mocked not at their godhead, for he knew
Behind all creeds the Spirit that is One.
(1888)

## ON CALAIS SANDS

On Calais Sands the gray began,
Then rosy red above the gray;
The morn with many a scarlet van
Leaped, and the world was glad with May!
The little waves along the bay
Broke white upon the shelving strands;
The sea-mews flitted white as they
On Calais Sands!

On Calais Sands must man with man
Wash honor clean in blood today;
On spaces wet from waters wan
How white the flashing rapiers play —
Parry, riposte! and lunge! The fray
Shifts for a while, then mournful stands
The victor; life ebbs fast away
On Calais Sands!

On Calais Sands a little space
Of silence; then the splash and spray,
The sound of eager waves that ran
To kiss the perfumed locks astray,
To touch these lips that ne'er said "Nay,"
To dally with the helpless hands,
Till the deep sea in silence lay
On Calais Sands!

Between the lilac and the may
She waits her love from alien lands;
Her love is colder than the clay
On Calais Sands!
(1894)

## THREE PORTRAITS OF PRINCE CHARLES

### 1731

Beautiful face of a child,
Lighted with laughter and glee,

---

*Herodotus in Egypt*. Herodotus, Greek traveler and historian, visited Egypt approximately from 460 to 454 B.C., and in Book 2 of his *History* recorded his impressions of Egyptian customs and religion.

2-3. **isle . . . sung.** Jason spent a considerable time on the island of Lemnos, in the Ægean sea, before proceeding on his quest of the Golden Fleece; Sappho (6th century B.C.), Greek lyric poet, lived on the island of Lesbos. 4. **secret-founted . . . Nile.** The source of the Nile was unknown to the ancients, who imagined it to proceed from mysterious underground channels; see Herodotus, Book 2, Section 28. 8. **Cat and Crocodile.** The cat, identified with the goddess Pasht, and the crocodile, identified with the water-god Sobk, were worshiped in Egyptian temples as sacred animals. See Herodotus, Book 2, Sections 67, 69. 9-11. **tales . . . Sun**, references to Egyptian myths. The death of the god Osiris from being locked in a chest and thrown into the sea, and the birth of the god Horus, are celebrated myths. Osiris, identified with the hawk, was the husband of Isis, identified with the serpent. From the marriage of Seb, the earth, and Nut, the sky, was born the race of Egyptian gods. According to one Egyptian legend, Osiris, the primal god of the sun, married Isis, goddess of the moon; he was later slain by his enemy, Set, but restored to life by Isis.

*On Calais Sands*. Calais, a French seaport across the English Channel from Dover, was a frequent dueling spot for Englishmen. Cf. Arnold's *Dover Beach*, page 483.

3. **van**, vanguard. 13. **riposte**, a return thrust; like parry and lunge, a term in fencing. 25. **may**, hawthorn.

*Three Portraits of Prince Charles*. Charles Edward Stuart (1720-88), called the Young Pretender and Bonnie Prince Charlie, grandson of James II of England, made an attempt (1745-46) to gain the British throne with the help of devoted Scottish Highlanders; defeated at Culloden, he solaced himself by notorious debaucheries, spent the last days of his life in Rome, and was buried in St. Peter's. Lang describes actual portraits of the Prince. See Lang's *Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Chevalier*, 1903.

Mirthful and tender and wild,
My heart is heavy for thee!

1744
Beautiful face of a youth,
As an eagle poised to fly forth
To the old land loyal of truth,
To the hills and the sounds of the North:
Fair face, daring and proud,
Lo! the shadow of doom, even now,
The fate of thy line, like a cloud,
Rests on the grace of thy brow!

1773
Cruel and angry face!
Hateful and heavy with wine,
Where are the gladness, the grace,
The beauty, the mirth that were thine?

Ah, my Prince, it were well —
Hadst thou to the gods been dear —
To have fallen where Keppoch fell,
With the war-pipe loud in thine ear!
To have died with never a stain
On the fair White Rose of renown,
To have fallen, fighting in vain,
For thy father, thy faith, and thy crown!
More than thy marble pile,
With its women weeping for thee,
Were to dream in thine ancient isle,
To the endless dirge of the sea!
But the fates deemed otherwise;
Far thou sleepest from home,
From the tears of the northern skies,
In the secular dust of Rome.

A city of death and the dead,
But thither a pilgrim came,
Wearing on weary head
The crowns of years and fame:
Little the Lucrine lake
Or Tivoli said to him,
Scarce did the memories wake
Of the far-off years and dim,
For he stood by Avernus' shore.
But he dreamed of a northern glen,
And he murmured, over and o'er,
*"For Charlie and his men"*:
And his feet, to death that went,
Crept forth to St. Peter's shrine,
And the latest minstrel bent
O'er the last of the Stuart line. (1894)

## EDMUND WILLIAM GOSSE
## (1849-1928)

### LYING IN THE GRASS

TO THOMAS HARDY

Between two golden tufts of summer grass,
I see the world through hot air as through glass,
And by my face sweet lights and colors pass.

Before me, dark against the fading sky,
I watch three mowers mowing, as I lie:
With brawny arms they sweep in harmony.

Brown English faces by the sun burnt red,
Rich glowing color on bare throat and head,
My heart would leap to watch them, were I dead!

And in my strong young living as I lie,
I seem to move with them in harmony —
A fourth is mowing, and that fourth am I.

The music of the scythes that glide and leap,
The young men whistling as their great arms sweep,
And all the perfume and sweet sense of sleep,

The weary butterflies that droop their wings,
The dreamy nightingale that hardly sings,
And all the lassitude of happy things,

Is mingling with the warm and pulsing blood
That gushes through my veins a languid flood,
And feeds my spirit as the sap a bud.

Behind the mowers, on the amber air,
A dark-green beech-wood rises, still and fair,
A white path winding up it like a stair.

And see that girl, with pitcher on her head,
And clean white apron on her gown of red —
Her even-song of love is but half-said;

She waits the youngest mower. Now he goes;
Her cheeks are redder than a wild blush-rose;
They climb up where the deepest shadows close.

---

4. **My . . . thee.** "Charles is loved for his forlorn hope: for his desperate resolve; for his reckless daring, the winning charm that once were his; for bright hair, and brown eyes; above all, as the center and inspirer of old chivalrous loyalty, as one who would have brought back a lost age, an impossible realm of dreams" (Lang's *Prince Charles*, page 4). 18. **gods . . . dear.** An allusion to the Greek proverb "Whom the Gods love die young." 19. **Keppoch,** a Highland chief, leader of the Macdonald clan, killed at Culloden Field. 22. **White Rose,** emblem of the Stuarts. 34. **a pilgrim,** Sir Walter Scott, who used the theme of the "forlorn hope" of Charles Stuart in *Waverley* and *Redgauntlet.* Scott visited Rome in 1831, shortly before his death. 37. **Lucrine lake,** the site of an ancient lake near Rome. 38. **Tivoli,** a town near Rome. 41. **Avernus,** a lake near Rome, regarded by the ancients as the entrance to the lower world.

46. **St. Peter's shrine.** The tomb of the Stuarts is in St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome. 47. **latest minstrel,** Scott, author of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

But though they pass, and vanish, I am there.
I watch his rough hands meet beneath her hair,
Their broken speech sounds sweet to me like prayer.

Ah! now the rosy children come to play,
And romp and struggle with the new-mown hay;
Their clear high voices sound from far away.

They know so little why the world is sad,
They dig themselves warm graves and yet are glad;
Their muffled screams and laughter make me mad!

I long to go and play among them there;
Unseen, like wind, to take them by the hair,
And gently make their rosy cheeks more fair.

The happy children! full of frank surprise,
And sudden whims and innocent ecstasies;
What godhead sparkles from their liquid eyes!

No wonder round those urns of mingled clays
That Tuscan potters fashioned in old days,
And colored like the torrid earth ablaze,

We find the little gods and loves portrayed,
Through ancient forests wandering undismayed,
And fluting hymns of pleasure unafraid.

They knew, as I do now, what keen delight
A strong man feels to watch the tender flight
Of little children playing in his sight;

What pure sweet pleasure, and what sacred love,
Come drifting down upon us from above,
In watching how their limbs and features move.

I do not hunger for a well-stored mind;
I only wish to live my life, and find
My heart in unison with all mankind.

My life is like the single dewy star
That trembles on the horizon's primrose-bar—
A microcosm where all things living are.

And if, among the noiseless grasses, Death
Should come behind and take away my breath,
I should not rise as one who sorroweth;

For I should pass, but all the world would be
Full of desire and young delight and glee,
And why should men be sad through loss of me?

The light is flying; in the silver-blue
The young moon shines from her bright window through:
The mowers are all gone, and I go too. (1873)

## ON A LUTE FOUND IN A SARCOPHAGUS

What curled and scented sun-girls, almond-eyed,
With lotos-blossoms in their hands and hair,
Have made their swarthy lovers call them fair,
With these spent strings, when brutes were deified,
And Memnon in the sunrise sprang and cried,
And love-winds smote Bubastis, and the bare
Black breasts of carven Pasht received the prayer
Of suppliants bearing gifts from far and wide!
This lute has out-sung Egypt; all the lives
Of violent passion, and the vast calm art
That lasts in granite only, all lie dead;
This little bird of song alone survives,
As fresh as when its fluting smote the heart
Last time the brown slave wore it garlanded.
(1873)

## WITH A COPY OF HERRICK

Fresh with all airs of woodland brooks
  And scents of showers,
Take to your haunt of holy books
  This saint of flowers.

*Lying in the Grass.* 47. **Tuscan potters,** a reference to the glossy red Samian ware made in Arezzo, a town in Tuscany, during the first centuries of the Roman Empire; these urns were made of blended clay and were decorated with foliage and figures in slight relief. 49. **little . . . loves,** Cupids. 63. **microcosm,** a world in miniature.

*On a Lute Found in a Sarcophagus.* Cf. Lang's *Herodotus in Egypt*, page 797.
2. **lotos-blossoms.** The fruit of the lotos tree caused forgetfulness; see Tennyson's *The Lotos-Eaters*, page 28. 4. **brutes . . . deified.** See note on Lang's *Herodotus in Egypt*, line 8, page 797. 5. **Memnon . . . cried.** See note on line 171, page 26. 6-7. **Bubastis . . . Pasht.** Bubastis is a city in the Egyptian delta, called the "city of Pasht" from its temple and statue of Pasht, the cat-headed goddess.

*With a Copy of Herrick.* Robert Herrick (1591-1674), while clergyman of a country parish in Devon, composed his *Hesperides* and *Noble Numbers* in which he mingled religious poetry with love lyrics and descriptions

"of Brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July-flowers."

When meadows burn with budding May,
And heaven is blue,
Before his shrine our prayers we say —
Saint Robin true.
Love crowned with thorns is on his staff —
Thorns of sweet briar;
His benediction is a laugh,
Birds are his choir.

His sacred robe of white and red
Unction distils;
He hath a nimbus round his head
Of daffodils. (1885)

### IMPRESSION

In these restrained and careful times
Our knowledge petrifies our rimes;
Ah! for that reckless fire men had
When it was witty to be mad,

When wild conceits were piled in scores,
And lit by flaring metaphors,
When all was crazed and out of tune —
Yet throbbed with music of the moon.

If we could dare to write as ill
As some whose voices haunt us still,
Even we, perchance, might call our own
Their deep enchanting undertone.

We are too diffident and nice,
Too learned and too over-wise,
Too much afraid of faults to be
The flutes of bold sincerity.

For as this sweet life passes by,
We blink and nod with critic eye;
We've no words rude enough to give
Its charm so frank and fugitive.

The green and scarlet of the Park,
The undulating streets at dark,
The brown smoke blown across the blue,
This colored city we walk through —

The pallid faces full of pain,
The field-smell of the passing wain,
The laughter, longing, perfume, strife,
The daily spectacle of life —

Ah! how shall this be given to rime,
By rimesters of a knowing time?
Ah! for the age when verse was glad,
Being godlike, to be bad and mad. (1894)

## ALICE CHRISTIANA MEYNELL
(1850-1922)

### SONG OF THE NIGHT AT DAYBREAK

All my stars forsake me,
And the dawn-winds shake me;
Where shall I betake me?

Whither shall I run
Till the set of the sun,
Till the day be done?

To the mountain-mine,
To the boughs o' the pine,
To the blind man's eyne,

To a brow that is
Bowed upon the knees,
Sick with memories. (1875)

### A SONG OF DERIVATIONS

I come from nothing; but from where
Come the undying thoughts I bear?
Down, through long links of death and birth,
From the past poets of the earth,
My immortality is there.

I am like the blossom of an hour.
But long, long vanished sun and shower
Awoke my breath i' the young world's air;
I track the past back everywhere
Through seed and flower and seed and flower.

Or I am like a stream that flows
Full of the cold springs that arose
In morning lands, in distant hills;
And down the plain my channel fills
With melting of forgotten snows.

Voices I have not heard possessed
My own fresh songs; my thoughts are blessed
With relics of the far unknown;
And mixed with memories not my own
The sweet streams throng into my breast.

Before this life began to be,
The happy songs that wake in me

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8. **Robin,** Robert. 15. **nimbus,** halo.

*Impression.* Gosse here records his impression of the difference between early nineteenth century and late Victorian poetry. Cf. Dobson's *On the Future of Poetry*, page 769.

4. **When . . . mad,** a reference to the days of Shelley and Byron. 8. **throbbed . . . moon,** a reference to Keats and his *Endymion*. 9-12. **If we . . . undertone,** possibly a reference to the poorer work of Wordsworth; cf. Stephen's *A Sonnet*, page 811. 13-16. **We are . . . sincerity.** Cf. Arnold's *The Scholar-Gypsy*, page 471. 21. **the Park,** Hyde Park, the chief park of London. 26. **wain,** wagon.

32. **bad and mad.** Cf. Lady Caroline Lamb's description of Lord Byron: "Mad, bad, and dangerous to know."

Woke long ago, and far apart.
Heavily on this little heart
Presses this immortality.
(1875)

## AFTER A PARTING

Farewell has long been said; I have foregone thee;
I never name thee even.
But how shall I learn virtues and yet shun thee?
For thou art so near heaven
That heavenward meditations pause upon thee.

Thou dost beset the path to every shrine;
My trembling thoughts discern
Thy goodness in the good for which I pine;
And, if I turn from but one sin, I turn
Unto a smile of thine.

How shall I thrust thee apart
Since all my growth tends to thee night and day —
To thee faith, hope, and art?
Swift are the currents setting all one way;
They draw my life, my life, out of my heart.
(*1877;* 1890)

## RENOUNCEMENT

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight —
The thought of thee — and in the blue heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.
Oh, just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.
But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away —
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.
(*1877;* 1893)

## THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks — the lady of my delight —
A shepherdess of sheep.
(1894)

## THE LADY POVERTY

The Lady Poverty was fair;
But she has lost her looks of late,
With change of times and change of air.
Ah, slattern! she neglects her hair,
Her gown, her shoes; she keeps no state
As once when her pure feet were bare.

Or — almost worse, if worse can be —
She scolds in parlors, dusts and trims,
Watches and counts. Oh, is this she
Whom Francis met, whose step was free,
Who with obedience caroled hymns,
In Umbria walked with Chastity?

Where is her ladyhood? Not here,
Not among modern kinds of men;
But in the stony fields, where clear
Through the thin trees, the skies appear,
In delicate spare soil and fen,
And slender landscape and austere.
(1894)

## "I AM THE WAY"

Thou art the Way.
Hadst Thou been nothing but the goal,
I cannot say
If Thou hadst ever met my soul.

---

*After a Parting.* This lyric, like *Renouncement*, was written to the young Catholic priest who had first encouraged her writing and who had received her into the Catholic Church.

*The Lady Poverty.* 9-12. **Oh . . . Chastity.** St. Francis (1182-1226), identified with the town of Assisi, in Umbria, Italy, vowed himself to chastity, obedience, and poverty, and founded the great Franciscan order of friars.

*"I Am the Way."* The title is quoted from *John*, 14:6.— "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me."

I cannot see —
I, child of process — if there lies
An end for me,
Full of repose, full of replies.

I'll not reproach
The road that winds, my feet that err.
Access, Approach
Art Thou, Time, Way, and Wayfarer. (1896)

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
(1850-1894)

### TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

FROM HER BOY

For the long nights you lay awake
And watched for my unworthy sake;
For your most comfortable hand
That led me through the uneven land;
For all the story-books you read;
For all the pains you comforted;
For all you pitied, all you bore,
In sad and happy days of yore;
My second Mother, my first Wife,
The angel of my infant life —
From the sick child, now well and old,
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!

And grant it, Heaven, that all who read
May find as dear a nurse at need,
And every child who lists my rime,
In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,
May hear it in as kind a voice
As made my childish days rejoice! (1885)

### BED IN SUMMER

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day? (1885)

### WHOLE DUTY OF CHILDREN

A child should always say what's true
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table —
At least as far as he is able. (1885)

### PIRATE STORY

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,
Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,
And waves are on the meadow like the waves that are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, today that we're afloat,
Wary of the weather and steering by a star?
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,
To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea —
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!
Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,
The wicket is the harbor, and the garden is the shore. (1885)

### FOREIGN LANDS

Up into the cherry tree
Who should climb but little me?
I held the trunk with both my hands
And looked abroad on foreign lands.

I saw the next door garden lie,
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,
And many pleasant places more
That I had never seen before.

I saw the dimpling river pass
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;
The dusty roads go up and down
With people tramping into town.

If I could find a higher tree
Farther and farther I should see,
To where the grown-up river slips
Into the sea among the ships,

To where the roads on either hand
Lead onward into fairyland,

---

6. **Of process,** in the meshes of life—queer, changing, ordered, yet apparently meaningless.

*To Alison Cunningham.* This is the dedicatory poem to *A Child's Garden of Verses*, from which the following lyrics through *The Little Land* (page 805) are taken; Alison Cunningham, or "Cummy," had been Stevenson's nurse during his sickly childhood.

*Pirate Story.* 8. **Providence,** an island in the Bahamas, West Indies. **Babylon,** the ancient capital of Assyria. **Malabar,** a district in West Madras, India.

Where all the children dine at five,
And all the playthings come alive.
(1885)

## TRAVEL

I should like to rise and go
Where the golden apples grow;—
Where below another sky
Parrot islands anchored lie,
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,
Lonely Crusoes building boats;—
Where in sunshine reaching out
Eastern cities, miles about,
Are with mosque and minaret
Among sandy gardens set,
And the rich goods from near and far
Hang for sale in the bazaar;—
Where the Great Wall round China goes,
And on one side the desert blows,
And with bell and voice and drum,
Cities on the other hum;—
Where are forests, hot as fire,
Wide as England, tall as a spire,
Full of apes and cocoanuts
And the negro hunters' huts;—
Where the knotty crocodile
Lies and blinks in the Nile,
And the red flamingo flies
Hunting fish before his eyes;—
Where in jungles, near and far,
Man-devouring tigers are,
Lying close and giving ear,
Lest the hunt be drawing near,
Or a comer-by be seen
Swinging in a palanquin;—
Where among the desert sands
Some deserted city stands,
All its children, sweep and prince,
Grown to manhood ages since,
Not a foot in street or house,
Not a stir of child or mouse,
And when kindly falls the night,
In all the town no spark of light.
There I'll come when I'm a man
With a camel caravan;
Light a fire in the gloom
Of some dusty dining-room;
See the pictures on the walls,
Heroes, fights and festivals;
And in a corner find the toys
Of the old Egyptian boys.
(1885)

## LOOKING FORWARD

When I am grown to man's estate
I shall be very proud and great,
And tell the other girls and boys
Not to meddle with my toys.
(1885)

## AUNTIE'S SKIRTS

Whenever Auntie moves around,
Her dresses make a curious sound;
They trail behind her up the floor,
And trundle after through the door.
(1885)

## THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE

When I was sick and lay a-bed,
I had two pillows at my head,
And all my toys beside me lay
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so
I watched my leaden soldiers go,
With different uniforms and drills,
Among the bedclothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets
All up and down among the sheets;
Or brought my trees and houses out,
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still
That sits upon the pillow-hill,
And sees before him, dale and plain,
The pleasant Land of Counterpane.
(1885)

## THE LAND OF NOD

From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay,
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the Land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do—
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the Land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.
(1885)

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*Travel.* 2. **Where . . . grow,** in the fabulous garden of the Hesperides. 13. **Great Wall,** built in the years following 214 B.C., by the emperor Che Hwang-te, to protect the northern frontier of China from the invasions of the Tartars. 30. **palanquin,** an enclosed chair borne on the shoulders of porters. 33. **sweep,** chimney-sweep. Cf. Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, IV, 2, 262-63.—

"Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust."

## MY SHADOW

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow —
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stands so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

(1885)

## SYSTEM

Every night my prayers I say,
And get my dinner every day;
And every day that I've been good,
I get an orange after food.

The child that is not plain and neat,
With lots of toys and things to eat,
He is a naughty child, I'm sure —
Or else his dear papa is poor.

(1885)

## ESCAPE AT BEDTIME

The lights from the parlor and kitchen shone out
Through the blinds and the windows and bars;
And high overhead and all moving about,
There were thousands of millions of stars.
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,
Nor of people in church or the Park,
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,
And that glittered and winked in the dark.

The Dog, and the Plow, and the Hunter, and all,
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall
Would be half full of water and stars.
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,
And they soon had me packed into bed;
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,
And the stars going round in my head.

(1885)

## THE COW

The friendly cow all red and white,
I love with all my heart —
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,
And yet she cannot stray,
All in the pleasant open air,
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers,
She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers. (1885)

## HAPPY THOUGHT

The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

(1885)

## THE WIND

I saw you toss the kites on high
And blow the birds about the sky;
And all around I heard you pass,
Like ladies' skirts across the grass —
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,
But always you yourself you hid.
I felt you push, I heard you call,
I could not see yourself at all —
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,
O blower, are you young or old?

---

9. **Dog, Plow, Hunter,** names of familiar constellations.
10. **star of the sailor,** the North Star.

Are you a beast of field and tree,
Or just a stronger child than me?
O wind, a-blowing all day long,
O wind, that sings so loud a song! (1885)

## GOOD AND BAD CHILDREN

Children, you are very little,
And your bones are very brittle;
If you would grow great and stately,
You must try to walk sedately.

You must still be bright and quiet,
And content with simple diet;
And remain, through all bewild'ring,
Innocent and honest children.

Happy hearts and happy faces,
Happy play in grassy places —
That was how, in ancient ages,
Children grew to kings and sages.

But the unkind and the unruly,
And the sort who eat unduly,
They must never hope for glory —
Theirs is quite a different story!

Cruel children, crying babies,
All grow up as geese and gabies,
Hated, as their age increases,
By their nephews and their nieces. (1885)

## THE LAMPLIGHTER

My tea is nearly ready, and the sun has left the sky;
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by;
For every night at teatime and before you take your seat,
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;
But I, when I am stronger and can choose what I'm to do,
O Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;
And O! before you hurry by with ladder and with light,
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him tonight! (1885)

## TIME TO RISE

A birdie with a yellow bill
Hopped upon the window-sill,
Cocked his shining eye and said:
"Ain't you 'shamed, you sleepy-head!"
(1885)

## THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So, when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear Land of Story-books. (1885)

## THE LITTLE LAND

When at home alone I sit
And am very tired of it,
I have just to shut my eyes
To go sailing through the skies —
To go sailing far away
To the pleasant Land of Play;
To the fairy land afar
Where the Little People are;
Where the clover-tops are trees,
And the rain-pools are the seas,
And the leaves like little ships
Sail about on tiny trips;
And above the daisy tree
Through the grasses,
High o'erhead the Bumble Bee
Hums and passes.

In that forest to and fro
I can wander, I can go;
See the spider and the fly,

---

*Good and Bad Children.* 18. gabies, dunces.

And the ants go marching by
Carrying parcels with their feet
Down the green and grassy street.
I can in the sorrel sit
Where the ladybird alit.
I can climb the jointed grass;
And on high
See the greater swallows pass
In the sky,
And the round sun rolling by
Heeding no such things as I.

Through the forest I can pass
Till, as in a looking-glass,
Humming fly and daisy tree
And my tiny self I see,
Painted very clear and neat
On the rain-pool at my feet.
Should a leaflet come to land
Drifting near to where I stand,
Straight I'll board that tiny boat
Round the rain-pool sea to float.

Little thoughtful creatures sit
On the grassy coasts of it;
Little things with lovely eyes
See me sailing with surprise.
Some are clad in armor green
(These have sure to battle been!);
Some are pied with ev'ry hue,
Black and crimson, gold and blue;
Some have wings and swift are gone; —
But they all look kindly on.
When my eyes I once again
Open, and see all things plain:
High bare walls, great bare floor;
Great big knobs on drawer and door;
Great big people perched on chairs,
Stitching tucks and mending tears,
Each a hill that I could climb,
And talking nonsense all the time —
O dear me,
That I could be
A sailor on the rain-pool sea,
A climber in the clover tree,
And just come back, a sleepy-head,
Late at night to go to bed. (1885)

## A SONG OF THE ROAD

The gauger walked with willing foot,
And aye the gauger played the flute;
And what would Master Gauger play
But *Over the hills and far away?*

Whene'er I buckle on my pack
And foot it gayly in the track,
O pleasant gauger, long since dead,
I hear you fluting on ahead.

You go with me the selfsame way —
The selfsame air for me you play;
For I do think and so do you
It is the tune to travel to.

For who would gravely set his face
To go to this or t'other place?
There's nothing under heav'n so blue
That's fairly worth the traveling to.

On every hand the roads begin,
And people walk with zeal therein;
But wheresoe'er the highways tend,
Be sure there's nothing at the end.

Then follow you wherever hie
The traveling mountains of the sky,
Or let the streams of civil mode
Direct your choice upon the road;

For one and all, or high or low,
Will lead you where you wish to go;
And one and all go night and day
*Over the hills and far away!* (1887)

## THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

*A naked house, a naked moor,*
*A shivering pool before the door,*
*A garden bare of flowers and fruit*
*And poplars at the garden foot;*
*Such is the place that I live in,*
*Bleak without and bare within.*

Yet shall your ragged moor receive
The incomparable pomp of eve,
And the cold glories of the dawn
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;
And when the wind from place to place
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,
Your garden gloom and gleam again,
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.
Here shall the wizard moon ascend
The heavens, in the crimson end
Of day's declining splendor; here
The army of the stars appear.
The neighbor hollows dry or wet,
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;
And oft the morning muser see
Larks rising from the broomy lea,
And every fairy wheel and thread
Of cobweb dew-bediamonded.
When daisies go, shall winter time
Silver the simple grass with rime;

---

*A Song of the Road.* 1. **gauger**, a revenue officer who measures the contents of casks. 4. **Over . . . away**, the refrain of a popular 17th century song. It is found in Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer*, in Gay's *The Beggars' Opera*, and elsewhere. Cf. Henley's *Where Forlorn Sunsets*, p. 793.

*The House Beautiful.* The title was suggested by the wayside palace in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.
22. **broomy lea**, a field covered with broom, a shrub with stiff green branches.

Autumnal frosts enchant the pool
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;
And when snow-bright the moor expands,
How shall your children clap their hands!
To make this earth our hermitage,
A cheerful and a changeful page,
God's bright and intricate device
Of days and seasons doth suffice. (1887)

## TO ANDREW LANG

Dear Andrew, with the brindled hair,
Who glory to have thrown in air,
High over arm, the trembling reed,
By Ale and Kail, by Till and Tweed —
An equal craft of hand you show
The pen to guide, the fly to throw.
I count you happy-starred; for God,
When He with inkpot and with rod
Endowed you, bade your fortune lead
Forever by the crooks of Tweed,
Forever by the woods of song
And lands that to the Muse belong;
Or if in peopled streets, or in
The abhorred pedantic sanhedrin,
It should be yours to wander, still
Airs of the morn, airs of the hill,
The plovery forest and the seas
That break about the Hebrides,
Should follow over field and plain
And find you at the window-pane;
And you again see hill and peel,
And the bright springs gush at your heel.
So went the fiat forth, and so
Garrulous like a brook you go,
With sound of happy mirth and sheen
Of daylight — whether by the green
You fare that moment, or the gray;
Whether you dwell in March or May;
Or whether treat of reels and rods
Or of the old unhappy gods —
Still like a brook your page has shone,
And your ink sings of Helicon. (1887)

## REQUIEM

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
*Here he lies where he longed to be;*
*Home is the sailor, home from sea,*
*And the hunter home from the hill.* (1887)

## THE CELESTIAL SURGEON

If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain —
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in! (1887)

## IN THE STATES

With half a heart I wander here
As from an age gone by,
A brother — yet though young in years,
An elder brother, I.

You speak another tongue than mine,
Though both were English born.
I toward the night of time decline;
You mount into the morn.

Youth shall grow great and strong and free,
But age must still decay;
Tomorrow for the States — for me,
England and Yesterday. (1887)

## THE SPAEWIFE

Oh, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
Why chops are guid to brander and nane sae guid to fry,
An' siller, that's sae braw to keep, is brawer still to gi'e.
*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
Hoo a' things come to be whaur we find them when we try,

---

*To Andrew Lang.* See Lang's poems, pages 795 ff. 2-3. **thrown . . . reed,** cast with a fly-rod; Lang's poems include a section *On Fishing*. 4. **Ale . . . Tweed,** rivers in the border country, northern England and southern Scotland, where Lang was born and bred; see Lang's *Twilight on Tweed*, page 795. 14. **sanhedrin.** Originally signifying the supreme council of the Jews, the term is here applied to the faculty of the University of St. Andrews, of which Lang was long a member. 18. **Hebrides,** islands on the west coast of Scotland. 21. **peel,** the tower or keep of an ancient border castle. 30. **old unhappy gods.** See Lang's studies in comparative mythology: *Custom and Myth* (1884); *Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (1887); *The Making of Religion* (1898). 32. **your ink . . . Helicon,** your writing is genuinely inspired. Helicon was a Greek mountain sacred to the Muses.

*Requiem.* The title means *Rest*. It is the first word of a Mass for the dead, "Give eternal rest to them, O Lord."

*In the States.* Stevenson's first visit to America was from August, 1879, to August, 1880; most of his time was spent in Monterey and San Francisco. He was in America again from August, 1887, to June, 1888, largely at Saranac Lake, New York, where this poem was written.

*The Spaewife.* A spaewife is a fortune-teller.

2. **brander,** broil on a gridiron. 3. **siller,** money. **braw,** fine. 4. **It's . . . spierin',** it's easy enough to ask.

The lasses in their claes an' the fishes in the sea.
*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
Why lads are a' to sell an' lasses a' to buy;
An' naebody for dacency but barely twa or three.
*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
Gin death's as shüre to men as killin' is to kye,
Why God has filled the yearth sae fu' o' tasty things to pree.
*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

Oh, I wad like to ken — to the beggar-wife says I —
The reason o' the cause an' the wherefore o' the why,
Wi' mony anither riddle brings the tear into my e'e.
*It's gey an' easy spierin'*, says the beggar-wife to me.

(1887)

## CHRISTMAS AT SEA

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was a nor'-wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard.
So's we saw the cliff and houses and the breakers running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blesséd Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blesséd Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate, Jackson, cried.
. . . "It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,

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7. **claes,** clothes. 14. **Gin,** if. **kye,** cows. 15. **pree,** taste.

*Christmas at Sea.* This poem is not autobiographical, although it is connected with many lighthouse-inspection trips which Stevenson made with his father.

And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood;
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old. (1888)

## I WILL MAKE YOU BROOCHES

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night.
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests and blue days at sea.

I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom,
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.

And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire. (1895)

## BRIGHT IS THE RING OF WORDS

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them.
Still they are caroled and said —
On wings they are carried —
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings,
And the maid remembers. (1895)

## SING ME A SONG

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Mull was astern, Rum on the port,
Egg on the starboard bow;
Glory of youth glowed in his soul —
Where is that glory now?

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Give me again all that was there,
Give me the sun that shone!
Give me the eyes, give me the soul,
Give me the lad that's gone!

Sing me a song of a lad that is gone,
Say, could that lad be I?
Merry of soul he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Billow and breeze, islands and seas,
Mountains of rain and sun,
All that was good, all that was fair,
All that was me is gone. (1895)

## EVENSONG

The embers of the day are red
Beyond the murky hill.
The kitchen smokes; the bed
In the darkling house is spread.
The great sky darkens overhead,
And the great woods are shrill.
So far have I been led,
Lord, by thy will;
So far I have followed, Lord, and wondered still.
The breeze from the embalméd land
Blows sudden toward the shore,
And claps my cottage door.
I hear the signal, Lord — I understand.
The night at thy command
Comes. I will eat and sleep and will not question more. (1895)

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38. **smelt**, eased gradually.
*I Will Make You Brooches.* 6. **broom**, a shrub with stiff, green branches.

*Sing Me a Song.* 4-6. **Skye . . . Egg**, islands on the western coast of Scotland. The route from Mull to Skye is due north and passes, at the half-way point, between Rum on the left and Egg (or Eigg) on the right; the distance is about forty miles. Stevenson made this trip in 1874 on board the schooner *Heron*.

## JAMES KENNETH STEPHEN
(1859-1892)

### OF LORD B.

A GRIEVANCE

Dear Mr. Editor: I wish to say —
If you will not be angry at my writing it —
But I've been used, since childhood's happy day,
When I have thought of something, to inditing it —
I seldom think of things; and, by the way,
Although this meter may not be exciting, it
Enables one to be extremely terse,
Which is not what one always is in verse.

I used to know a man — such things befall
The observant wayfarer through Fate's domain.
He was a man, take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again —
I know that statement's not original;
What statement is, since Shakspere? or, since Cain,
What murder? I believe 'twas Shakspere said it, or
Perhaps it may have been your Fighting Editor.

Though why an Editor should fight, or why
A Fighter should abase himself to edit,
Are problems far too difficult and high
For me to solve with any sort of credit;
Some greatly more accomplished man than I
Must tackle them. Let's say then Shakspere said it;
And, if he did not, Lewis Morris may
(Or even if he did). Some other day,

When I have nothing pressing to impart,
I should not mind dilating on this matter;
I feel its import both in head and heart,
And always did — especially the latter.
I could discuss it in the busy mart
Or on the lonely housetop; hold! this chatter
Diverts me from my purpose. To the point:
The time, as Hamlet said, is out of joint,

And I perhaps was born to set it right,
A fact I greet with perfect equanimity.
I do not put it down to "curséd spite" —
I don't see any cause for cursing in it; I
Have always taken very great delight
In such pursuits since first I read divinity —
Whoever will may write a nation's songs
As long as I'm allowed to right its wrongs.

What's Eton but a nursery of wrong-righters,
A mighty mother of effective men,
A training-ground for amateur reciters,
A sharpener of the sword as of the pen,
A factory of orators and fighters,
A forcing-house of genius? Now and then,
The world at large shrinks back, abashed and beaten,
Unable to endure the glare of Eton.

I think I said I knew a man; what then?
I don't suppose such knowledge is forbid;
We nearly all do, more or less, know men —
Or think we do; nor will a man get rid
Of that delusion, while he wields a pen.
But who this man was, what, if aught, he did,
Nor why I mentioned him, I do not know,
Nor what I "wished to say" a while ago.

(1889)

### TO R. K.

Will there never come a season
Which shall rid us from the curse
Of a prose which knows no reason
And an unmelodious verse;
When the world shall cease to wonder
At the genius of an ass,
And a boy's eccentric blunder
Shall not bring success to pass;

When mankind shall be delivered
From the clash of magazines,
And the inkstand shall be shivered
Into countless smithereens;
When there stands a muzzled stripling,
Mute, beside a muzzled bore;
When the Rudyards cease from kipling
And the Haggards ride no more.

(1891)

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*Of Lord B.* This is a satiric parody of Lord Byron's digressive, consciously careless style in *Beppo* and *Don Juan*.
11-12. **He was a man,** etc. Said by Hamlet of his father—*Hamlet*, I, 2, 187-188. 23. **Lewis Morris,** Welch poet (1833-1907), author of *The Song of Two Worlds* and *The Epic of Hades*. 32-33. **The time . . . right.** From *Hamlet*, I, 5, 188-189.—

"The time is out of joint: O curséd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!"

39-40. **Whoever . . . wrongs.** Cf. Andrew Fletcher, *Letter to the Marquis of Montrose*, 1703: "I knew a very wise man . . . that believed that if a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make the laws of the nation." 41. **Eton,** an English "public school," somewhat like an American preparatory school, near Windsor on the Thames; it has a multitude of famous men among its graduates.
*To R. K.* R. K. is Rudyard Kipling.
16. **Haggards ride.** Sir Henry Rider Haggard (1856-1925) was an English author of imaginative adventure stories such as *She* and *King Solomon's Mines*.

### A SONNET

Two voices are there: one is of the deep;
It learns the storm-cloud's thunderous melody,
Now roars, now murmurs with the changing sea,
Now bird-like pipes, now closes soft in sleep;
And one is of an old half-witted sheep
Which bleats articulate monotony,
And indicates that two and one are three,
That grass is green, lakes damp, and mountains steep:
And, Wordsworth, both are thine; at certain times,
Forth from the heart of thy melodious rimes
The form and pressure of high thoughts will burst;
At other times — good Lord! I'd rather be
Quite unacquainted with the A. B. C.
Than write such hopeless rubbish as thy worst.
(1891)

## OSCAR WILDE (1856-1900)

### IMPRESSIONS

#### 1. LES SILHOUETTES

The sea is flecked with bars of gray,
The dull dead wind is out of tune,
And like a withered leaf the moon
Is blown across the stormy bay.

Etched clear upon the pallid sand
Lies the black boat; a sailor boy
Clambers aboard in careless joy
With laughing face and gleaming hand.

And overhead the curlews cry,
Where through the dusky upland grass
The young brown-throated reapers pass,
Like silhouettes against the sky.
(1877)

#### 2. LA FUITE DE LA LUNE

To outer senses there is peace,
A dreamy peace on either hand,
Deep silence in the shadowy land,
Deep silence where the shadows cease —

Save for a cry that echoes shrill
From some lone bird disconsolate;
A corncrake calling to its mate;
The answer from the misty hill.

And suddenly the moon withdraws
Her sickle from the lightening skies,
And to her somber cavern flies,
Wrapped in a veil of yellow gauze.
(1877)

### THE GRAVE OF KEATS

Rid of the world's injustice, and his pain,
He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue;
Taken from life when life and love were new
The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,
Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.
No cypress shades his grave, no funeral yew,
But gentle violets weeping with the dew
Weave on his bones an ever-blossoming chain.
O proudest heart that broke for misery!
O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene!
O poet-painter of our English Land!
Thy name was writ in water — it shall stand;
And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,
As Isabella did her Basil-tree.
(1877)

### HÉLAS!

To drift with every passion till my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,
Is it for this that I have given away
Mine ancient wisdom and austere control?
Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday
With idle songs for pipe and virelay,
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.
Surely there was a time I might have trod
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God.
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance —
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?
(1881)

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*A Sonnet.* This sonnet sparkles with recollections from Wordsworth. See especially his sonnets beginning "Two Voices are there: one is of the sea," and "A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by." With lines 11-12, compare *The World Is Too Much with Us*, lines 9-10.—

"Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn."

*Impressions.* *Les Silhouettes* means *The Silhouettes*. *La Fuite de la Lune* means *The Flight of the Moon*.

*The Grave of Keats.* Keats, like Shelley, is buried in the lovely English Cemetery at Rome.

5. **Sebastian**, a Christian martyr shot with arrows and beaten to death by order of the emperor Diocletian (288); he is represented in art as a beautiful young man. 6. **cypress . . . yew**, symbols of mourning. 10. **Mitylene**, a city on the island of Lesbos (in the Ægean Sea) where Sappho, the Greek poetess (6th century B.C.), lived and sang. 12. **name . . . water**, the epitaph on the tombstone of Keats; it was composed by himself. See Rossetti's sonnet *John Keats*, page 543. 14. **Isabella . . . Basil-tree.** See Keats's *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*, 1818; the story, retold from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, is of a lady who buried her murdered lover's head in a pot, and planted there a basil-tree which she watered with her tears.

*Hélas!* The title means *Alas!*

7. **virelay**, an old French lyric form, using only two rimes and composed in short lines with a refrain. 12-13. **a little rod**, etc., a reference to Moses's securing water for the Israelites by striking a rock with his rod; see *Exodus*, 17:3-7.

## REQUIESCAT

Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow;
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast;
I vex my heart alone,
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet,
All my life's buried here,
Heap earth upon it. (1881)

## IMPRESSION: LE RÉVEILLON

The sky is laced with fitful red;
The circling mists and shadows flee;
The dawn is rising from the sea,
Like a white lady from her bed.

And jagged brazen arrows fall
Athwart the feathers of the night,
And a long wave of yellow light
Breaks silently on tower and hall,

And spreading wide across the wold
Wakes into flight some fluttering bird,
And all the chestnut tops are stirred,
And all the branches streaked with gold.
(1881)

## APOLOGIA

Is it thy will that I should wax and wane,
Barter my cloth of gold for hodden gray,
And at thy pleasure weave the web of pain
Whose brightest threads are each a wasted day?

Is it thy will — Love that I love so well —
That my Soul's House should be a tortured spot
Wherein, like evil paramours, must dwell
The quenchless flame, the worm that dieth not?

Nay, if it be thy will, I shall endure,
And sell ambition at the common mart,
And let dull failure be my vestiture,
And sorrow dig its grave within my heart.

Perchance it may be better so — at least
I have not made my heart a heart of stone,
Nor starved my boyhood of its goodly feast,
Nor walked where Beauty is a thing unknown.

Many a man hath done so; sought to fence
In straitened bonds the soul that should be free,
Trodden the dusty road of common sense,
While all the forest sang of liberty,

Not marking how the spotted hawk in flight
Passed on wide pinion through the lofty air,
To where some steep untrodden mountain height
Caught the last tresses of the Sun God's hair;

Or how the little flower he trod upon,
The daisy, that white-feathered shield of gold,
Followed with wistful eyes the wandering sun,
Content if once its leaves were aureoled.

But surely it is something to have been
The best belovéd for a little while,
To have walked hand in hand with Love, and seen
His purple wings flit once across thy smile.

Aye! though the gorgéd asp of passion feed
On my boy's heart, yet have I burst the bars,
Stood face to face with Beauty, known indeed
The Love which moves the Sun and all the stars! (1881)

## THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL

### I

He did not wear his scarlet coat,
For blood and wine are red,
And blood and wine were on his hands

*Requiescat.* The title means *Let Her Rest.*

*Impression: Le Réveillon. Le Réveillon* is a term used in painting to designate a strong light-effect against a somber background.

*Apologia.* The title means *Apology*—a self-justification, as in Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua;* Wilde's most complete *apologia* is his *De Profundis.*

24. **Sun God.** Apollo, to whom the daisy (day's eye) was sacred. 25-28. **little flower . . . aureoled.** Cf. Browning's *Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli,* 6-18, page 191. 36. **Love . . . stars.** Cf. the last line of Dante's *Divine Comedy:* "Love, which moves the sun and the other stars."

*The Ballad of Reading Gaol.* The background of the ballad is the jail at Reading, Berkshire, where Wilde was imprisoned, 1896-97; the central event is the execution, for murder, of a trooper in the Royal Horse Guards, July 7, 1896. The ballad was written at Berneval, France, after Wilde's release.

When they found him with the dead,
The poor dead woman whom he loved,
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men
In a suit of shabby gray;
A cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay;
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.

I walked, with other souls in pain,
Within another ring,
And was wondering if the man had done
A great or little thing,
When a voice behind me whispered low,
*"That fellow's got to swing."*

Dear Christ! the very prison walls
Suddenly seemed to reel,
And the sky above my head became
Like a casque of scorching steel;
And, though I was a soul in pain,
My pain I could not feel.

I only knew what hunted thought
Quickened his step, and why
He looked upon the garish day
With such a wistful eye;
The man had killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

Some kill their love when they are young,
And some when they are old;
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,
Some with the hands of Gold.
The kindest use a knife, because
The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,
Some sell, and others buy;
Some do the deed with many tears,
And some without a sigh;
For each man kills the thing he loves,
Yet each man does not die.

He does not die a death of shame
On a day of dark disgrace,
Nor have a noose about his neck,
Nor a cloth upon his face,
Nor drop feet foremost through the floor
Into an empty space.

He does not sit with silent men
Who watch him night and day;
Who watch him when he tries to weep,
And when he tries to pray;
Who watch him lest himself should rob
The prison of its prey.

He does not wake at dawn to see
Dread figures throng his room —
The shivering chaplain robed in white,
The sheriff stern with gloom,
And the governor all in shiny black,
With the yellow face of Doom.

He does not rise in piteous haste
To put on convict-clothes,
While some coarse-mouthed doctor gloats, and notes
Each new and nerve-twitched pose,
Fingering a watch whose little ticks
Are like horrible hammer-blows.

He does not know that sickening thirst
That sands one's throat before
The hangman with his gardener's gloves
Slips through the padded door,
And binds one with three leathern thongs,
That the throat may thirst no more.

He does not bend his head to hear
The burial office read,
Nor, while the terror of his soul
Tells him he is not dead,
Cross his own coffin, as he moves
Into the hideous shed.

He does not stare upon the air
Through a little roof of glass;
He does not pray with lips of clay
For his agony to pass;
Nor feel upon his shuddering cheek
That kiss of Caiaphas.

## 2

Six weeks our guardsman walked the yard,
In the suit of shabby gray.
His cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay,
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

---

7. **Trial Men**, men sentenced by a preliminary court the verdict of which might be appealed.

96. **kiss of Caiaphas**, the kiss of Judas bought with the money received from Caiaphas, the high priest, for the betrayal of Christ. See *Matthew*, 26.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every wandering cloud that trailed
Its raveled fleeces by.

He did not wring his hands, as do
Those witless men who dare
To try to rear the changeling Hope
In the cave of black Despair;
He only looked upon the sun,
And drank the morning air.

He did not wring his hands nor weep,
Nor did he peek or pine,
But he drank the air as though it held
Some healthful anodyne;
With open mouth he drank the sun
As though it had been wine!

And I and all the souls in pain,
Who tramped the other ring,
Forgot if we ourselves had done
A great or little thing,
And watched with gaze of dull amaze
The man who had to swing.

And strange it was to see him pass
With a step so light and gay,
And strange it was to see him look
So wistfully at the day,
And strange it was to think that he
Had such a debt to pay.

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves
That in the springtime shoot;
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,
With its adder-bitten root,
And, green or dry, a man must die
Before it bears its fruit!

Strong
great!

The loftiest place is that seat of grace
For which all wordlings try;
But who would stand in hempen band
Upon a scaffold high,
And through a murderer's collar take
His last look at the sky?

It is sweet to dance to violins
When love and life are fair;
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes
Is delicate and rare;
But it is not sweet with nimble feet
To dance upon the air!

So with curious eyes and sick surmise
We watched him day by day,
And wondered if each one of us
Would end the self-same way,
For none can tell to what red hell
His sightless soul may stray.

At last the dead man walked no more
Amongst the Trial Men,
And I knew that he was standing up
In the black dock's dreadful pen,
And that never would I see his face
In God's sweet world again.

Like two doomed ships that pass in storm
We had crossed each other's way;
But we made no sign, we said no word —
We had no word to say —
For we did not meet in the holy night,
But in the shameful day.

A prison wall was round us both,
Two outcast men we were.
The world had thrust us from its heart,
And God from out His care;
And the iron gin that waits for Sin
Had caught us in its snare.

## 3

In Debtors' Yard the stones are hard,
And the dripping wall is high,
So it was there he took the air
Beneath the leaden sky,
And by each side a warder walked,
For fear the man might die.

Or else he sat with those who watched
His anguish night and day;
Who watched him when he rose to weep,
And when he crouched to pray;
Who watched him lest himself should rob
Their scaffold of its prey.

The governor was strong upon
The Regulations Act;
The doctor said that death was but
A scientific fact;
And twice a day the chaplain called,
And left a little tract.

And twice a day he smoked his pipe,
And drank his quart of beer.
His soul was resolute, and held
No hiding-place for fear;
He often said that he was glad
The hangman's hands were near.

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118. **anodyne,** a drug that kills pain.

173. **gin,** trap. 175. **Debtors' Yard,** a division of the exercise ground in Reading Gaol, formerly set apart for debtors. 188. **Regulations Act,** a law placing all prisons under governmental supervision and prescribing humane treatment for prisoners.

But why he said so strange a thing
No warder dared to ask;
For he to whom a watcher's doom
Is given at his task,
Must set a lock upon his lips,
And make his face a mask.

Or else he might be moved, and try
To comfort or console —
And what should human Pity do
Pent up in Murderers' Hole?
What word of grace in such a place
Could help a brother's soul?

With slouch and swing around the ring
We trod the Fools' Parade!
We did not care — we knew we were
The Devil's Own Brigade;
And shaven head and feet of lead
Make a merry masquerade.

We tore the tarry rope to shreds
With blunt and bleeding nails;
We rubbed the doors, and scrubbed the floors,
And cleaned the shining rails;
And, rank by rank, we soaped the plank,
And clattered with the pails.

We sewed the sacks, we broke the stones,
We turned the dusty drill;
We banged the tins, and bawled the hymns,
And sweated on the mill;
But in the heart of every man
Terror was lying still.

So still it lay that every day
Crawled like a weed-clogged wave;
And we forgot the bitter lot
That waits for fool and knave,
Till once, as we tramped in from work,
We passed an open grave.

With yawning mouth the yellow hole
Gaped for a living thing;
The very mud cried out for blood
To the thirsty asphalt ring.
And we knew that ere one dawn grew fair
Some prisoner had to swing.

Right in we went, with soul intent
On Death and Dread and Doom.
The hangman, with his little bag,
Went shuffling through the gloom;
And each man trembled as he crept
Into his numbered tomb.

That night the empty corridors
Were full of forms of Fear,
And up and down the iron town
Stole feet we could not hear,
And through the bars that hide the stars
White faces seemed to peer.

He lay as one who lies and dreams
In a pleasant meadow-land;
The watchers watched him as he slept,
And could not understand
How one could sleep so sweet a sleep
With a hangman close at hand.

But there is no sleep when men must weep
Who never yet have wept;
So we — the fool, the fraud, the knave —
That endless vigil kept,
And through each brain on hands of pain
Another's terror crept.

Alas! it is a fearful thing
To feel another's guilt!
For, right within, the sword of Sin
Pierced to its poisoned hilt,
And as molten lead were the tears we shed
For the blood we had not spilt.

The warders with their shoes of felt
Crept by each padlocked door,
And peeped and saw, with eyes of awe,
Gray figures on the floor,
And wondered why men knelt to pray
Who never prayed before.

All through the night we knelt and prayed,
Mad mourners of a corse!
The troubled plumes of midnight were
The plumes upon a hearse;
And bitter wine upon a sponge
Was the savor of Remorse.

The gray cock crew, the red cock crew,
But never came the day;
And crooked shapes of Terror crouched,
In the corners where we lay;
And each evil sprite that walks by night
Before us seemed to play.

They glided past, they glided fast,
Like travelers through a mist;
They mocked the moon in a rigadoon
Of delicate turn and twist,
And with formal pace and loathsome grace
The phantoms kept their tryst.

With mop and mow, we saw them go,
Slim shadows hand and hand;
About, about, in ghostly rout
They trod a saraband;

---

217. **We . . . shreds.** Prisoners sentenced to hard labor, as Wilde was, were forced to tear ropes to shreds to make oakum for calking vessels.

291. **rigadoon,** a gay, lively dance. 298. **saraband,** a stately Spanish dance.

And the damned grotesques made arabesques,
Like the wind upon the sand! 300

With the pirouettes of marionettes,
They tripped on pointed tread;
But with flutes of Fear they filled the ear,
As their grisly masque they led,
And loud they sang, and long they sang, 305
For they sang to wake the dead.

"*Oho!*" they cried, "*the world is wide,*
*But fettered limbs go lame!*
*And once, or twice, to throw the dice*
*Is a gentlemanly game,* 310
*But he does not win who plays with Sin*
*In the secret House of Shame.*"

No things of air these antics were,
That frolicked with such glee;
To men whose lives were held in gyves, 315
And whose feet might not go free,
Ah! wounds of Christ! they were living things,
Most terrible to see.

Around, around, they waltzed and wound;
Some wheeled in smirking pairs; 320
With the mincing step of a demirep
Some sidled up the stairs;
And with subtle sneer, and fawning leer,
Each helped us at our prayers.

The morning wind began to moan, 325
But still the night went on;
Through its giant loom the web of gloom
Crept till each thread was spun;
And, as we prayed, we grew afraid
Of the Justice of the Sun. 330

The moaning wind went wandering round
The weeping prison-wall;
Till like a wheel of turning steel
We felt the minutes crawl.
O moaning wind! what had we done 335
To have such a seneschal?

At last I saw the shadowed bars,
Like a lattice wrought in lead,
Move right across the whitewashed wall
That faced my three-plank bed, 340
And I knew that somewhere in the world
God's dreadful dawn was red.

At six o'clock we cleaned our cells,
At seven all was still,
But the sough and swing of a mighty wing 345
The prison seemed to fill,
For the Lord of Death with icy breath
Had entered in to kill.

He did not pass in purple pomp,
Nor ride a moon-white steed. 350
Three yards of cord and a sliding board
Are all the gallows' need;
So with rope of shame the Herald came
To do the secret deed.

We were as men who through a fen 355
Of filthy darkness grope:
We did not dare to breathe a prayer,
Or to give our anguish scope:
Something was dead in each of us,
And what was dead was Hope. 360

For man's grim Justice goes its way,
And will not swerve aside:
It slays the weak, it slays the strong,
It has a deadly stride:
With iron heel it slays the strong, 365
The monstrous parricide!

We waited for the stroke of eight:
Each tongue was thick with thirst:
For the stroke of eight is the stroke of Fate
That makes a man accursed, 370
And Fate will use a running noose
For the best man and the worst.

We had no other thing to do,
Save to wait for the sign to come:
So, like things of stone in a valley lone, 375
Quiet we sat and dumb:
But each man's heart beat thick and quick,
Like a madman on a drum!

With sudden shock the prison-clock
Smote on the shivering air, 380
And from all the gaol rose up a wail
Of impotent despair,
Like the sound that frightened marshes hear
From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things 385
In the crystal of a dream,
We saw the greasy hempen rope
Hooked to the blackened beam,
And heard the prayer the hangman's snare
Strangled into a scream. 390

And all the woe that moved him so
That he gave that bitter cry,
And the wild regrets, and the bloody sweats,
None knew so well as I:
For he who lives more lives than one 395
More deaths than one must die.

4

There is no chapel on the day
On which they hang a man;

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299. **arabesques,** interlaced lines and curves. 301. **pirouettes of marionettes,** whirlings on their toes, like dancing puppets.

386. **crystal . . . dream,** in a dream where, as in the ball of the crystal-gazer, move uncanny shapes.

The chaplain's heart is far too sick,
  Or his face is far too wan,
Or there is that written in his eyes
  Which none should look upon.

So they kept us close till nigh on noon,
  And then they rang the bell,
And the warders with their jingling keys
  Opened each listening cell,
And down the iron stair we tramped,
  Each from his separate hell.

Out into God's sweet air we went,
  But not in wonted way,
For this man's face was white with fear,
  And that man's face was gray,
And I never saw sad men who looked
  So wistfully at the day.

I never saw sad men who looked
  With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
  We prisoners called the sky,
And at every careless cloud that passed
  In happy freedom by.

But there were those amongst us all
  Who walked with downcast head,
And knew that, had each got his due,
  They should have died instead:
He had but killed a thing that lived,
  Whilst they had killed the dead.

For he who sins a second time
  Wakes a dead soul to pain,
And draws it from its spotted shroud,
  And makes it bleed again,
And makes it bleed great gouts of blood,
  And makes it bleed in vain!

Like ape or clown, in monstrous garb
  With crooked arrows starred,
Silently we went round and round
  The slippery asphalt yard;
Silently we went round and round,
  And no man spoke a word.

Silently we went round and round,
  And through each hollow mind
The Memory of dreadful things
  Rushed like a dreadful wind,
And Horror stalked before each man,
  And Terror crept behind.

The warders strutted up and down,
  And kept their herd of brutes;
Their uniforms were spick and span,
  And they wore their Sunday suits,
But we knew the work they had been at,
  By the quicklime on their boots.

For where a grave had opened wide,
  There was no grave at all —
Only a stretch of mud and sand
  By the hideous prison-wall,
And a little heap of burning lime,
  That the man should have his pall.

For he has a pall, this wretched man,
  Such as few men can claim;
Deep down below a prison-yard,
  Naked for greater shame,
He lies, with fetters on each foot,
  Wrapt in a sheet of flame!

And all the while the burning lime
  Eats flesh and bone away —
It eats the brittle bone by night,
  And the soft flesh by day;
It eats the flesh and bone by turns,
  But it eats the heart alway.

For three long years they will not sow
  Or root or seedling there;
For three long years the unblessed spot
  Will sterile be and bare,
And look upon the wondering sky
  With unreproachful stare.

They think a murderer's heart would taint
  Each simple seed they sow.
It is not true! God's kindly earth
  Is kindlier than men know,
And the red rose would but blow more red,
  The white rose whiter blow.

Out of his mouth a red, red rose!
  Out of his heart a white!
For who can say by what strange way,
  Christ brings His will to light,
Since the barren staff the pilgrim bore
  Bloomed in the great Pope's sight?

But neither milk-white rose nor red
  May bloom in prison air;
The shard, the pebble, and the flint,
  Are what they give us there;
For flowers have been known to heal
  A common man's despair.

So never will wine-red rose or white,
  Petal by petal, fall

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434. **arrows.** The garb of English convicts was marked with arrows.

456. **pall**, the cloth thrown over a coffin. 485–86. **barren . . . sight**, a reference to the old German legend of Tannhaüser, which Wagner made the basis for an opera. Tannhaüser, guilty of heinous sin, besought Pope Urban IV (1261–64) for forgiveness; the pope declared that pardon was as impossible as for roses to bloom on the pilgrim's staff; after Tannhaüser left, the staff burst into bloom. Compare Swinburne's *Laus Veneris*, page 664, and [illegible], line 157 and note, page 692, and line 166 and note, page 692.

On that stretch of mud and sand that lies
By the hideous prison-wall,
To tell the men who tramp the yard
That God's Son died for all.

Yet though the hideous prison-wall
Still hems him round and round,
And a spirit may not walk by night
That is with fetters bound,
And a spirit may but weep that lies
In such unholy ground,

He is at peace — this wretched man —
At peace, or will be soon;
There is no thing to make him mad,
Nor does Terror walk at noon,
For the lampless Earth in which he lies
Has neither Sun nor Moon.

They hanged him as a beast is hanged;
They did not even toll
A requiem that might have brought
Rest to his startled soul,
But hurriedly they took him out,
And hid him in a hole.

They stripped him of his canvas clothes,
And gave him to the flies;
They mocked the swollen purple throat,
And the stark and staring eyes;
And with laughter loud they heaped the shroud
In which their convict lies.

The chaplain would not kneel to pray
By his dishonored grave,
Nor mark it with that blessed Cross
That Christ for sinners gave,
Because the man was one of those
Whom Christ came down to save.

Yet all is well; he has but passed
To Life's appointed bourne;
And alien tears will fill for him
Pity's long-broken urn,
For his mourners will be outcast men,
And outcasts always mourn.

### 5

I know not whether laws be right,
Or whether laws be wrong;
All that we know who lie in jail
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every law
That men have made for man,
Since first man took his brother's life,
And the sad world began,
But straws the wheat and saves the chaff
With a most evil fan.

This too I know — and wise it were
If each could know the same —
That every prison that men build
Is built with bricks of shame,
And bound with bars lest Christ should see
How men their brothers maim.

With bars they blur the gracious moon,
And blind the goodly sun;
And they do well to hide their hell,
For in it things are done
That Son of God nor son of Man
Ever should look upon!

The vilest deeds like poison weeds
Bloom well in prison-air;
It is only what is good in man
That wastes and withers there.
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,
And the warder is Despair.

For they starve the little frightened child
Till it weeps both night and day;
And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool,
And gibe the old and gray,
And some grow mad, and all grow bad,
And none a word may say.

Each narrow cell in which we dwell
Is a foul and dark latrine,
And the fetid breath of living Death
Chokes up each grated screen,
And all, but Lust, is turned to dust
In Humanity's machine.

The brackish water that we drink
Creeps with a loathsome slime,
And the bitter bread they weigh in scales
Is full of chalk and lime,
And Sleep will not lie down, but walks
Wild-eyed, and cries to Time.

But though lean Hunger and green Thirst
Like asp and adder fight,
We have little care of prison fare,
For what chills and kills outright
Is that every stone one lifts by day
Becomes one's heart at night.

With midnight always in one's heart,
And twilight in one's cell,
We turn the crank, or tear the rope,
Each in his separate hell,
And the silence is more awful far
Than the sound of a brazen bell.

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545. **straws**, throws away.

And never a human voice comes near
To speak a gentle word;
And the eye that watches through the door
Is pitiless and hard;
And by all forgot, we rot and rot,
With soul and body marred.

And thus we rust Life's iron chain,
Degraded and alone;
And some men curse, and some men weep,
And some men make no moan;
But God's eternal laws are kind
And break the heart of stone.

And every human heart that breaks,
In prison-cell or yard,
Is as that broken box that gave
Its treasure to the Lord,
And filled the unclean leper's house
With the scent of costliest nard.

Ah! happy they whose hearts can break
And peace of pardon win!
How else may man make straight his plan
And cleanse his soul from sin?
How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in?

And he of the swollen purple throat,
And the stark and staring eyes,
Waits for the holy hands that took
The Thief to Paradise;
And a broken and a contrite heart
The Lord will not despise.

The man in red who reads the law
Gave him three weeks of life,
Three little weeks in which to heal
His soul of his soul's strife,
And cleanse from every blot of blood
The hand that held the knife.

And with tears of blood he cleansed the hand,
The hand that held the steel —
For only blood can wipe out blood,
And only tears can heal —
And the crimson stain that was of Cain
Became Christ's snow-white seal.

6

In Reading gaol by Reading town
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Eaten by teeth of flame,
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,
And his grave has got no name.

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,
In silence let him lie.
No need to waste the foolish tear,
Or heave a windy sigh;
The man had killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,
By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword! (*1896;* 1898)

## EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON
(1845-1907)

### WHAT THE SONNET IS

Fourteen small broidered berries on the hem
Of Circe's mantle, each of magic gold;
Fourteen of lone Calypso's tears that rolled
Into the sea, for pearls to come of them;
Fourteen clear signs of omen in the gem
With which Medea human fate foretold;
Fourteen small drops, which Faustus, growing old,
Craved of the Fiend, to water Life's dry stem.
It is the pure white diamond Dante brought
To Beatrice, the sapphire Laura wore
When Petrarch cut it sparkling out of thought;
The ruby Shakespeare hewed from his heart's core;
The dark, deep emerald that Rossetti wrought
For his own soul, to wear for evermore.
(1894)

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609-12. **box . . . nard.** See *Mark*, 14:3-9. While Christ was dining with Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster box, broke it open, and poured the contents—the precious ointment, nard—over Christ's head. 621-22. **holy . . . Paradise.** See *Luke*, 23:39-43. Christ said to the repentant thief on the cross: "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise." 623-24. **broken . . . despise.** From *Psalms*, 51:17.—"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." 625. **man in red**, the judge who passed sentence of death upon the prisoner. Cf. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, I, 9—"Has not your Red hanging-individual a horeshair wig, squirrel skins, and a plush gown; whereby all mortals know that he is a JUDGE?" 635-36. **stain . . . seal.** See *Isaiah*, 1:18. —"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

*What the Sonnet Is.* 2. **Circe**, the enchantress of Homer's *Odyssey*, Book 10. 3. **Calypso**, the nymph on the island of Ogygia who detained Ulysses for seven years and wept at his departure (*Odyssey*, Book 5). 6. **Medea.** See the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes; Medea was a princess of the Colchians who fell in love with Jason and, by her powers of sorcery, enabled him to carry off the Golden Fleece from her father's kingdom. 7-8. **Fourteen . . . stem.** Dr. Faustus, in Marlowe's tragic drama, having come to the expiration of his twenty years of pleasure, seeks to evade damnation by availing himself of Christ's power to pardon sin; one drop of Christ's blood shed for man's redemption would save his soul, but that drop Mephistopheles will not permit Faustus to have. 9-10. **diamond . . . Beatrice**, sonnets interspersed in the *Vita Nuova* (1307) of Dante, which describe his Platonic passion for Beatrice, his ideal lady. 10-11. **sapphire . . . thought.** The *Canzoniere* of Petrarch (1327-50), which include sonnets addressed to his lady Laura, for centuries set the fashion in sonnet-writing. 12. **ruby . . . core**, a reference to Shakespeare's sonnets. 13. **emerald . . . wrought**, Rossetti's *House of Life;* see pages 527-537.

## SONNET GOLD

We get it from Etruscan tombs, hid deep
Beneath the passing plowshare, or from caves
Known but to Prospero, where pale-green waves
Have rolled the wreck-gold, which the mermaids keep.
And from the caverns, where the gnomes upheap,
The secret treasures, which the Earth's dwarf slaves
Coin in her bosom, till the red gold paves
Her whole great heart, where only poets peep;
Or from old missals, where the gold defies
Time's hand, in saints' bright aureoles, and keeps,
In angels' long straight trumpets, all its flash;
But chiefly from the crucible, where lies
The alchemist's pure dream-gold. While he sleeps
The poet steals it, leaving him the ash. (1894)

## EPILOGUE

I wrought them like a targe of hammered gold
On which all Troy is battling round and round;
Or Circe's cup, embossed with snakes that wound
Through buds and myrtles, fold on scaly fold;
Or like gold coins, which Lydian tombs may hold,
Stamped with winged racers, in the old red ground;
Or twined gold armlets from the funeral mound
Of some great viking, terrible of old.
I know not in what metal I have wrought,
Nor whether what I fashion will be thrust
Beneath the clods that hide forgotten thought;
But if it is of gold it will not rust,
And when the time is ripe it will be brought
Into the sun, and glitter through its dust.
(1894)

## THE DEATH OF PUCK

I fear that Puck is dead,—it is so long
Since men last saw him—dead with all the rest
Of that sweet elfin crew that made their nest
In hollow nuts, where hazels sing their song;
Dead and forever, like the antique throng
The elves replaced: the Dryad that you guessed
Behind the leaves; the Naiad weed-bedressed;
The leaf-eared Faun that loved to lead you wrong.
Tell me, thou hopping Robin, hast thou met
A little man no bigger than thyself,
Whom they call Puck, where woods and lanes are wet?
Tell me, thou Wood-Mouse, hast thou seen an elf
Whom they call Puck, and is he seated yet,
Capped with a snail-shell, on his mushroom shelf?

The Robin gave three hops, and chirped, and said:
"Yes, I knew Puck, and loved him; though I trow
He mimicked oft my whistle, chuckling low;
Yes, I knew cousin Puck, but he is dead.
We found him lying on his mushroom bed—
The Wren and I,—half covered up with snow,
As we were hopping where the berries grow.
We think he died of cold. Aye, Puck is fled."

And then the Wood-Mouse said: "We made the Mole
Dig him a little grave beneath the moss,
And four big Dormice placed him in the hole.
The Squirrel made with sticks a little cross;
Puck was a Christian elf, and had a soul,
And all we velvet jackets mourn his loss."

# FRANCIS WILLIAM BOURDILLON

## (1852-1921)

## THE NIGHT HAS A THOUSAND EYES

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

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*Sonnet Gold.* 1. **Etruscan tombs.** From the tombs of ancient Etruria, a district north of Rome with a civilization older than that of Rome, gold jewelry of fine workmanship has been excavated in abundance. 3. **Prospero,** the banished duke who practices magic arts in Shakespeare's *Tempest.* 9. **missals,** books of the Mass, often illuminated with initials and designs in which gold-leaf is freely used.

*Epilogue.* This is the epilogue to the volume *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours.*

1-2. **targe . . . round,** a shield embossed with scenes from Homer's *Iliad.* 3. **Circe's cup,** the golden cup from which Circe, the enchantress of the *Odyssey,* Book 10, offered Ulysses drugged wine. 5. **Lydian tombs.** Lydia, an ancient empire in western Asia Minor, rose to great wealth and power under Croesus; from its tombs have been gleaned numbers of gold coins, the oldest known. 7. **twined . . . mound.** Bracelets of heavy gold were buried with Teutonic chieftains. Bracelets were among the treasures found in the mound in *Beowulf*, Section 38.

*The Death of Puck.* Puck was the goblin of English folklore adapted by Shakespeare for his *Midsummer Night's Dream.* 6. **Dryad,** wood nymph. 7. **Naiad,** a water-nymph. 8. **Faun,** a goat-footed woodland creature, follower of Pan.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done. (1890)

## LATET ANGUIS

Ah! full of purest influence
On human mind and mood,
Of holiest joy to human sense,
Are river, field, and wood;
And better must all childhood be
That knows a garden and a tree.

For where can one diviner gleam
On daughter of his sires lie?
And what of Heaven can childhood dream,
That naught has seen the sky?
Yet sin and sorrow's pedigree
Springs from a Garden and a Tree.

## SURSUM CORDA

How can the outworn heart
To earth that clings
From self-spun cerements start
On rainbow wings?

How from its shroud of mould
The butterfly
Save with its wings of gold
Love of the sky?

## HONEY-LAND

Where should the poet wander
To garnish his golden cells?
'Tis in Yesterday and Yonder
The honey of dreamland dwells.

For him in the rainbow's resting,
And the talking of wind and tree,
And the star in the still pool nesting,
And the moon-path over the sea.

## TO A PAINTER

Whoever opens me
The secret of the earth, the sky, the sea,
In the soft trance of song,
Or painter's mirror-magic yet more strong,
That voice, that hand I bless.
For 'tis my heart's faith, to bring loveliness
Is more than to bring ease,
To make a soul more than to mend disease.

## WILLIAM SHARP ("Fiona Macleod")*
### (1856-1905)

## THE LAST ABORIGINAL

I see him sit, wild-eyed, alone,
Amidst gaunt, spectral, moonlit gums;
He waits for death: not once a moan
From out his rigid fixed lips comes;
His lank hair falls adown a face
Haggard as any wave-worn stone,
And in his eyes I dimly trace
The memory of a vanished race.

The lofty ancient gum-trees stand,
Each gray and ghostly in the moon,
The giants of an old strange land
That was exultant in its noon
When all our Europe was o'erturned
With deluge and with shifting sand,
With earthquakes that the hills inurned
And central fires that fused and burned.

The moon moves slowly through the vast
And solemn skies, the night is still,
Save when a warrigal springs past
With dismal howl, or when the shrill
Scream of a parrot rings which feels
A twining serpent's fangs fixed fast,
Or when a gray opossum squeals —
Or long iguana, as it steals

From bole to bole, disturbs the leaves,
But hushed and still he sits — who knows
That all is o'er for him who weaves
With inner speech, malign, morose,
A curse upon the whites who came
And gathered up his race like sheaves
Of thin wheat, fit but for the flame —
Who shot or spurned them without shame.

He knows he shall not see again
The creeks whereby the lyre-birds sing;

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*Latet Anguis.* The title is quoted from Virgil's *Eclogues*, 3, 93: *Latet anguis in herba*—There is a snake in the grass.

*Sursum Corda.* The title means "Lift up Your Hearts." It is one of the lines spoken alternately by priest and people in the Preface to the Roman Catholic Mass.

3. cerements, grave-clothes.

*"Fiona Macleod" is the pseudonym which Sharp adopted after 1894 to distinguish his more romantic poetry from that written under his own name, which had preceded. The name is feminine; *Fiona* is the diminutive of *Fionnaghal*, meaning *a fair maid*, and had been borne by the daughter of a Highland clergyman whom Sharp knew.

*The Last Aboriginal.* This poem is connected with Sharp's voyage to Australia in 1876. This and the following four poems are signed "William Sharp."

11-16. The giants . . . burned. Geologists regard Australia as the earliest formed of the continents and the least affected by prehistoric disturbances. 18. warrigal, the Australian wild dog. 24. iguana, a large lizard. 25. bole, tree-trunk.

He shall no more upon the plain,
Sun-scorched, and void of water-spring,
Watch the dark cassowaries sweep
In startled flight, or, with spear lain
In ready poise, glide, twist, and creep
Where the brown kangaroo doth leap.

No more in silent dawns he'll wait
By still lagoons, and mark the flight
Of black swans near; no more elate
Whirl high the boomerang aright
Upon some foe. He knows that now
He too must share his race's night —
He scarce can know the white man's plow
Will one day pass above his brow.

Last remnant of the Austral race,
He sits and stares, with failing breath;
The shadow deepens on his face,
For 'midst the spectral gums waits death:
A dingo's sudden howl swells near —
He stares once with a startled gaze,
As half in wonder, half in fear,
Then sinks back on his unknown bier. (1884)

## THE COVES OF CRAIL

The moon-white waters wash and leap,
The dark tide floods the Coves of Crail;
Sound, sound he lies in dreamless sleep,
Nor hears the sea-wind wail.

The pale gold of his oozy locks
Doth hither drift and thither wave;
His thin hands plash against the rocks,
His white lips nothing crave.

Afar away she laughs and sings —
A song he loved, a wild sea-strain —
Of how the mermen weave their rings
Upon the reef-set main.

Sound, sound he lies in dreamless sleep,
Nor hears the sea-wind wail,
Though with the tide his white hands creep
Amid the Coves of Crail. (1888)

## HIGH NOON AT MIDSUMMER ON THE CAMPAGNA

High noon,
And from the purple-veilèd hills
To where Rome lies in azure mist,
Scarce any breath of wind
Upon this vast and solitary waste,
These leagues of sunscorched grass
Where i' the dawn the scrambling goats maintain
A hardy feast,
And where, when the warm yellow moonlight floods the flats,
Gaunt laggard sheep browse spectrally for hours
While not less gaunt and spectral shepherds stand
Brooding, or with hollow vacant eyes
Stare down the long perspectives of the dusk.
Now not a breath:
No sound;
No living thing,
Save where the beetle jars his cracklings hards,
Or where the hoarse cicala fills
The heavy heated hour with palpitant whirr.
Yet hark!
Comes not a low deep whisper from the ground,
A sigh as though the immemorial past
Breathed here a long, slow, breath?
Hushed nations sleep below; lost empires here
Are dust; and deeper still,
Dim shadowy peoples are the mold that warms
The roots of every flower that blooms and blows:
Even as we, too, bloom and fade,
Who are so fain
To be as the Night that dies not, but forever
Weaves her immortal web of starry fires;
To be as Time itself,
Time, whose vast holocausts
Lie here, deep buried from the ken of men,
Here, where no breath of wind
Ruffles the brooding heat,
The breathless blazing heat
Of Noon. (1891)

## THE WHITE PEACOCK

Here where the sunlight
Floodeth the garden,
Where the pomegranate
Reareth its glory
Of gorgeous blossom;
Where the oleanders
Dream through the noontides;
And, like surf o' the sea
Round cliffs of basalt,
The thick magnolias
In billowy masses
Front the somber green of the ilexes;
Here where the heat lies
Pale blue in the hollows,

---

49. **Austral race,** Australian aborigines, steadily diminishing in number. 53. **dingo,** the Australian wild-dog.

*The Coves of Crail.* Crail is a seaport on the east coast of Scotland, near St. Andrews. With this poem compare Ariel's song in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, 1, 2, 396 ff.

*High Noon at Midsummer on the Campagna.* The Campagna is the plain surrounding Rome; see Browning's *Two in the Campagna*, page 231.

*The White Peacock.* 12. **ilexes,** holly-trees.

Where blue are the shadows
On the fronds of the cactus,
Where pale blue the gleaming
Of fir and cypress,
With the cones upon them
Amber or glowing
With virgin gold;
Here where the honey-flower
Makes the heat fragrant,
As though from the gardens
Of Gulistan,
Where the bulbul singeth
Through a mist of roses
A breath were borne;
Here where the dream-flowers
The cream-white poppies
Silently waver,
And where the Sirocco,
Faint in the hollows,
Foldeth his soft white wings in the sunlight,
And lieth sleeping
Deep in the heart of
A sea of white violets —
Here, as the breath, as the soul of this beauty
Moveth in silence, and dreamlike, and slowly,
White as a snow-drift in mountain valleys
When softly upon it the gold light lingers,
White as the foam o' the sea that is driven
O'er billows of azure agleam with sun-yellow,
Cream-white and soft as the breasts of a girl,
Moves the White Peacock, as though through the noontide
A dream of the moonlight were real for a moment.
Dim on the beautiful fan that he spreadeth,
Foldeth and spreadeth abroad in the sunlight,
Dim on the cream-white are blue adumbrations,
Shadows so pale in their delicate blueness
That visions they seem as of vanishing violets,
The fragrant white violets veined with azure,
Pale, pale as the breath of blue smoke in far woodlands.
Here, as the breath, as the soul of this beauty,
White as a cloud through the heats of the noontide,
Moves the White Peacock. (1891)

## ON A NIGHTINGALE IN APRIL

The yellow moon is a dancing phantom
Down secret ways of the flowing shade;
And the waveless stream has a murmuring whisper
Where the alders wave.

Not a breath, not a sigh, save the slow stream's whisper;
Only the moon is a dancing blade
That leads a host of the Crescent warriors
To a phantom raid.

Out of the lands of Faerie a summons,
A long strange cry that thrills through the glade —
The gray-green glooms of the elm are stirring,
Newly afraid.

Last heard, white music, under the olives
Where once Theocritus sang and played —
Thy Thracian song is the old new wonder—
O moon-white maid!

## THE WHITE PEACE

It lies not on the sunlit hill
Nor on the sunlit plain;
Nor ever on any running stream
Nor on the unclouded main —

But sometimes, through the Soul of Man,
Slow moving o'er his pain,
The moonlight of a perfect peace
Floods heart and brain. (1894)

## SHULE, SHULE, SHULE, AGRAH!

His face was glad as dawn to me,
His breath was sweet as dusk to me,
His eyes were burning flames to me,
*Shule, shule, shule, agrah!*

The broad noon-day was night to me,
The full-moon night was dark to me,
The stars whirled and the poles span
The hour that God took him far from me.

Perhaps he dreams in heaven now,
Perhaps he doth in worship bow,
A white flame round his foam-white brow,
*Shule, shule, shule, agrah!*

I laugh to think of him like this,
Who once found all his joy and bliss
Against my heart, against my kiss,
*Shule, shule, shule, agrah!*

Star of my joy, art still the same
Now thou hast gotten a new name?

---

24-25. **gardens Of Gulistan.** Gulistan is a town in British Afghanistan; but Sharp associated the term with the *Gulistan*, or *Rose-Garden*, a collection of tales and aphorisms made by the Persian poet Sadi in 1258. 26. **bulbul**, the Persian nightingale. 32. **Sirocco**, a hot, dry wind from the desert.

7. **Crescent warriors**, Turks. 14. **Theocritus**, the third-century pastoral poet of Sicily. 15. **Thracian song.** According to Greek myth, the nightingale is the metamorphosed form of Philomela, whose sad ravishing occurred in Thrace. See Arnold's *Philomela*, page 470, and Swinburne's *Itylus*, page 675.

*The White Peace.* This and following poems of Sharp were signed "Fiona Macleod."

*Shule, Shule, Shule, Agrah!* The title means *Move, Move, Move to Me, My Heart* (Sharp's translation of the Gælic).

Pulse of my heart, my Blood, my Flame,
*Shule, shule, shule, agrah!* 20
(1896)

## THE ROSE OF FLAME

Oh, fair immaculate rose of the world, rose of my dream, my Rose!
Beyond the ultimate gates of dream I have heard thy mystical call:
It is where the rainbow of hope suspends and the river of rapture flows —
And the cool sweet dews from the wells of peace forever fall.
And all my heart is aflame because of the rapture and peace, 5
And I dream, in my waking dreams and deep in the dreams of sleep,
Till the high sweet wonderful call that shall be the call of release
Shall ring in my ears as I sink from gulf to gulf and from deep to deep —

Sink deep, sink deep beyond the ultimate dreams of all desire —
Beyond the uttermost limit of all that the craving spirit knows; 10
Then, then, oh, then I shall be as the inner flame of thy fire,
O fair immaculate rose of the world, rose of my dream, my Rose!
(1896)

## THE WASHER OF THE FORD

There is a lonely stream in a lone dim land:
It hath white dust for shore it has, white bones bestrew the strand:
The only thing that liveth there is a naked leaping sword;
But I, who a seer am, have seen the whirling hand
Of the Washer of the Ford.

A shadowy shape of cloud and mist, of gloom and dusk, she stands,
The Washer of the Ford:
She laughs, at times, and strews the dust through the hollow of her hands.
She counts the sins of all men there, and slays the red-stained horde —
The ghosts of all the sins of men must know the whirling sword 10
Of the Washer of the Ford.

She stoops and laughs when in the dust she sees a writhing limb:
'Go back into the ford,' she says, 'ye [illegible]
hither and thither swim;
Then I shall wash you white as dust, and shall take you by the hand,
And slay you there in silence with this my whirling brand,
And trample you into the dust of this white windless sand' —
This is the laughing word
Of the Washer of the Ford
Along that silent strand.
(1896)

## THE VALLEY OF WHITE POPPIES

Between the gray pastures and the dark wood
A valley of white poppies is lit by the low moon;
It is the grave of dreams, a holy rood.
It is quiet there; no wind doth ever fall.
Long, long ago a wind sang once a heart-sweet rune. 5
Now the white poppies grow, silent and tall.
A white bird floats there like a drifting leaf;
It feeds upon faint sweet hopes and perishing dreams
And the still breath of unremembering grief.
And as a silent leaf the white bird passes,
Winnowing the dusk by dim forgetful streams.
I am alone now among the silent grasses.

## THE VALLEY OF PALE BLUE FLOWERS

In a hidden valley a pale blue flower grows.
It is so pale that in the moonshine it is dimmer than dim gold,
And in the starshine paler than the palest rose.
It is the flower of dream. Who holds it is never old;
It is the flower of forgetfulness — and oblivion is youth;
Breathing it, flame is not empty air, dust is not cold.
Lift it, and there is no memory of sorrow or any ruth;
The gray monotone of the low sky is filled with light,
The dim, terrible, impalpable lie wears the raiment of truth.

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*The Rose of Flame.* Cf. Yeats's *The Rose of the World*, page 801.

*The Valley of White Poppies.* [illegible]

I lift it, now, for [illegible] heart of
the night
Fills me with dread. It may be that, as a
tiger in his lair,
Memory, crouching, waits, [illegible] into
the light.
No, I will clasp it close to my heart, over-
droop with my hair;
I will breathe thy frail faint breath, O pale
blue flower,
And then . . . and then . . . nothing shall
take me unaware!

Nothing: no thought, no fear, only the
invisible power
Of the vast deeps of night, wherein down a
shadowy stair
My soul slowly, slowly, slowly will sink to
its ultimate hour.
(1901)

## THE VALLEY OF SILENCE

In the secret Valley of Silence
No breath doth fall;
No wind stirs in the branches;
No bird doth call.
As on a white wall
A breathless lizard is still,
So silence lies in the valley
Breathlessly still.

In the dusk-grown heart of the valley
An altar rises white:
No rapt priest bends in awe
Before its silent light;
But sometimes a flight
Of breathless words of prayer
White-winged enclose the altar,
Eddies of prayer.
(1901)

## DIM FACE OF BEAUTY

Dim face of Beauty haunting all the world,
Fair face of Beauty all too fair to see,
Where the lost stars adown the heavens are
hurled,
There, there alone for thee
May white peace be.

For here where all the dreams of men are
whirled
Like sear torn leaves of autumn to and fro,
There is no place for thee in all the world,
Who driftest as a star
Beyond, afar.

Beauty, sad face of Beauty, Mystery, Wonder,
What are these dreams to foolish babbling
men
Who cry with little noise 'neath the thunder
Of ages ground to sand,
To a little sand.
(1907)

## VALE, AMOR!

We do not know this thing
By the spoken word;
It is as though in a dim wood
One heard a bird
Suddenly sing—and stop,
Then in the twinkling of an eye
A shadow glooms the earth and sky,
And we stand silent, startled, in a changed
mood.

It is but a little thing
The leaping sword,
When in the startled silence of changed mood
It comes as when a bird
Doth suddenly sing.
Death-thrust of sword or agony
Are alike swift and terrible and strong,
And no foot stirs the dead leaves of that
silent wood.
(1907)

## THE WEAVER OF SNOW

In Polar noons when the moonshine glimmers,
And the frost-fans whirl,
And whiter than moonlight the ice-flowers
grow,
And the lunar rainbow quivers and shimmers,
And the Silent Laughers dance to and fro,
A stooping girl
As pale as pearl
Gathers the frost-flowers where they blow:
And the fleet-foot fairies smile, for they know
The Weaver of Snow.

And she climbs at last to a berg set free,
That drifteth slow;
And she sails to the edge of the world we
see,
And waits till the wings of the north wind
lean
Like an eagle's wings o'er a lochan of green,
And the pale stars glow
On berg and floe,
Then down on our world with a wild laugh
of glee
She empties her lamp full of shimmer and
sheen.
*And that is the way in a dream I have seen*
*The Weaver of Snow.*
(1907)

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*Vale, Amor!* The title means *Farewell, love.*

*The Weaver of Snow.* 15. lochan: pond.

## DREAMS WITHIN DREAMS

I have gone out and seen the lands of Faery
And have found sorrow and peace and beauty there,
And have not known one from the other, but found each
Lovely and gracious alike, delicate and fair.

"They are children of one mother, she that is called Longing,
Desire, Love," one told me; and another, "Her secret name
Is Wisdom"; and another, "They are not three but one";
And another, "Touch them not, seek them not; they are wind and flame."

I have come back from the hidden, silent lands of Faery
And have forgotten the music of its ancient streams;
And now flame and wind and the long, gray, wandering wave
And beauty and peace and sorrow are dreams within dreams. (1907)

## LIONEL JOHNSON (1867-1902)

### BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT CHARING CROSS

Somber and rich, the skies;
Great glooms, and starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me; and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall.
Only the night wind glides;
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone too, his Court; and yet,
The stars his courtiers are —
Stars in their stations set,
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king;
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate —
The stars, or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great —
Those brows, or the skies?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy,
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends;
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life, and hapless? Nay;
Through death, life grew sublime.
*Speak after sentence?* Yea —
And to the end of time.

Armored he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom;
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ;
His soul was of the saints,
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace;
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps,
When all the cries are still,
The stars and heavenly deeps
Work out a perfect will.

### THE LAST MUSIC

Calmly, breathe calmly all your music, maids!
Breathe a calm music over my dead queen.
All your lives long, you have nor heard, nor seen,
Fairer than she, whose hair in somber braids
With beauty overshades
Her brow, broad and serene.

---

*By the Statue of King Charles at Charing Cross.* At Charing Cross, close to Trafalgar Square in London, stands an equestrian statue of King Charles I, who was beheaded by the Parliamentary party at the close of the Civil War, 1649.

10. **Whitehall,** the royal palace near Charing Cross; now only the banquet-hall is left standing.

31-32. **passing . . . ends.** Popular feeling was so stirred by the dignity and patience with which Charles met his end that the power of Parliament was shaken and the restoration of the monarchy was soon assured. 35. **Speak after sentence.** After Charles had been sentenced to death, he asked permission to speak; but John Bradshaw, the president of the court, refused the request because Charles had not recognized the right of the court to try him. 44. **art . . . joy.** In his palaces at Richmond and Whitehall, Charles made one of the finest collections of paintings in Europe.

Surely she hath lain so an hundred years;
Peace is upon her, old as the world's heart.
Breathe gently, music! Music done, depart,
And leave me in her presence to my tears,
With music in mine ears;
For sorrow hath its art.

Music, more music, sad and slow! she lies
Dead — and more beautiful than early morn.
Discrowned am I, and of her looks forlorn;
Alone, vain memories immortalize
The way of her soft eyes,
Her musical voice low-borne.

The balm of gracious death now laps her round,
As once life gave her grace beyond her peers.
Strange! that I loved this lady of the spheres,
To sleep by her at last in common ground,
When kindly sleep hath bound
Mine eyes, and sealed mine ears.

Maidens! make a low music; merely make
Silence a melody, no more. This day,
She travels down a pale and lonely way;
Now, for a gentle comfort, let her take
Such music, for her sake,
As mourning love can play.

Holy my queen lies in the arms of death;
Music moves over her still face, and I
Lean breathing love over her. She will lie
In earth thus calmly, under the wind's breath —
The twilight wind, that saith:
*Rest! worthy found, to die.* (1889)

## THE CHURCH OF A DREAM

Sadly the dead leaves rustle in the whistling wind,
Around the weather-worn, gray church, low down the vale;
The Saints in golden vesture shake before the gale;
The glorious windows shake, where still they dwell enshrined;
Old Saints by long dead, shriveled hands, long since designed:
There still, although the world autumnal be, and pale,
Still in their golden vesture the old saints prevail;
Alone with Christ, desolate else, left by mankind.
Only one ancient Priest offers the Sacrifice,
Murmuring holy Latin immemorial:
Swaying with tremulous hands the old censer full of spice,
In gray, sweet incense clouds; blue, sweet clouds mystical:
To him, in place of men, for he is old, suffice
Melancholy remembrances and vesperal.

(1890)

## TO MORFYDD

A voice on the winds,
A voice by the waters,
Wanders and cries:
*Oh! what are the winds?*
*And what are the waters?*
*Mine are your eyes!*

Western the winds are,
And western the waters,
Where the light lies:
*Oh! what are the winds?*
*And what are the waters?*
*Mine are your eyes!*

Cold, cold, grow the winds,
And wild grow the waters,
Where the sun dies:
*Oh! what are the winds?*
*And what are the waters?*
*Mine are your eyes!*

And down the night winds,
And down the night waters,
The music flies:
*Oh! what are the winds?*
*And what are the waters?*
*Cold be the winds,*
*And wild be the waters,*
*So mine be your eyes!*

(1891)

## LONDON TOWN

Let others chaunt a country praise,
Fair river walks and meadow ways;
Dearer to me my sounding days
In *London Town;*
To me the tumult of the street
Is no less music than the sweet
Surge of the wind among the wheat,
By dale or down.

Three names mine heart with rapture hails,
With homage: *Ireland, Cornwall, Wales* —

---

*The Last Music.* 15. **forlorn,** robbed.

*The Church of a Dream.* 14. **vesperal,** pertaining to the evening.

*To Morfydd.* Morfydd was an Irish girl to whom a number of Johnson's lyrics are addressed.

*London Town.* 10. **Ireland . . . Wales.** Johnson made vacation tours in all of these regions; to their influence he attributed a Celtic strain in his poetry.

Lands of lone moor, and mountain gales,
And stormy coast;
Yet *London's* voice upon the air
Pleads at mine heart, and enters there;
Sometimes I well-nigh love and dare
For *London* most.

Listen upon the ancient hills —
All silence! save the lark, who trills
Through sunlight, save the rippling rills;
There peace may be.
But listen to great *London*! loud,
As thunder from the purple cloud,
Comes the deep thunder of the crowd,
And heartens me.

*O gray, O gloomy skies!* What then?
Here is a marvellous world of men;
More wonderful than *Rome* was, when
The world was *Rome*!
See the great stream of life flow by!
Here thronging myriads laugh and sigh,
Here rise and fall, here live and die —
In this vast home.

In long array they march toward death,
Armies, with proud or piteous breath;
*Forward!* the spirit in them saith,
Spirit of life:
Here the triumphant trumpets blow;
Here mourning music sorrows low;
Victors and vanquished, still they go
Forward in strife.

Who will not heed so great a sight?
Greater than marshaled stars of night,
That move to music and with light:
For these are men!
These move to music of the soul,
Passions, that madden or control;
These hunger for a distant goal,
Seen now and then.

Is mine too tragical a strain,
Chaunting a burden full of pain,
And labor, that seems all in vain?
I sing but truth.
Still, many a merry pleasure yet
To many a merry measure set,
Is ours, who need not to forget
Summer and youth.

Do *London* birds forget to sing?
Do *London* trees refuse the spring?
Is *London* May no pleasant thing?
Let country fields,
To milking maid and shepherd boy,
Give flowers, and song, and bright employ:
Her children also can enjoy
What *London* yields.

Gleaming with sunlight, each soft lawn
Lies fragrant beneath dew of dawn;
The spires and towers rise, far withdrawn,
Through golden mist.
At sunset, linger beside *Thames*;
See now, what radiant lights and flames!
That ruby burns: that purple shames
The amethyst.

Winter was long and dark and cold:
Chill rains! grim fogs, black fold on fold,
Rough street, and square, and river rolled!
Ah, let it be;
Winter is gone! Soon comes July,
With wafts from hayfields by and by,
While in the dingiest courts you spy
Flowers fair to see.

Take heart of grace, and let each hour
Break gently into bloom and flower;
Winter and sorrow have no power
To blight all bloom.
One day, perchance, the sun will see
*London's* entire felicity,
And all her loyal children be
Clear of all gloom.

A dream? Dreams often dreamed come true:
Our world would seem a world made new
To those beneath the churchyard yew
Laid long ago!
When we beneath like shadows bide,
Fair *London*, throned upon *Thames'* side,
May be our children's children's pride;
And we shall know.

## CADGWITH

### I

*Man is a shadow's dream!*
Opulent Pindar saith:
Yet man may win a gleam
Of glory, before death.
Saith golden Shakespeare: *Man*
*Is a dream's shadow!* Yet,
Though death do all death can,
His soul toward life is set.

---

42-43. stars . . . music. The ancients believed that the stars made music as they revolved in their spheres.

91. yew, a tree, symbolic of sorrow, often planted in graveyards.

*Cadgwith.* Cadgwith is a fishing village in Cornwall. The poem is dedicated to Lawrence Binyon, a contemporary British poet.

1-2. Man . . . saith. From Pindar's eighth Pythian Ode, lines 95-96: "Man is but a dream of a shadow." Pindar (522-443 B.C.) was a Greek writer of choral odes famous for their elaborate harmonies. 5-6. Man . . . shadow. From *Hamlet*, II, 2, 265.—"A dream itself is but a shadow."

I, living with delight
This rich autumnal day,
Mark the gulls' curving flight
Across the black-girt bay;
And the sea's working men,
The fisher-folk, I mark
Haul down their boats, and then 15
Launch for the deep sea dark.

Far out the strange ships go,
Their broad sails flashing red
As flame, or white as snow:
The ships, as David said. 20

Winds rush and waters roll;
Their strength, their beauty, brings
Into mine heart the whole
Magnificence of things:

That men are counted worth 25
A part upon this sea;
A part upon this earth,
Exalts and heartens me.

Ah, Glaucus, soul of man!
Encrusted by each tide, 30
That, since the seas began,
Hath surged against thy side:

Encumbering thee with weed,
And tangle of the wave!
Yet canst thou rise at need, 35
And thy strong beauty saves

Tides of the world in vain
Desire to vanquish thee;
Prostrate, thou canst again
Rise, lord of earth and sea: 40

Rise, lord of sea and earth,
And winds, and starry night.
Thine is the greater birth
And origin of light.

My windows open to the autumn night,
In vain I watched for sleep to visit me;
How should sleep dull mine ears, and dim my
sight,
Who saw the stars, and listened to the sea?
Ah, how the City of our God is fair! 5
If, without sea, and starless though it be,
For joy of the majestic beauty there,
Men shall not miss the stars nor mourn the
sea.

3

Mary Star of the sea!
Look on this little place,
Bless the kind fisher race,
Mary Star of the sea!

Send harvest from the deep,
Mary Star of the Sea!
Mary Star of the Sea!
Let not these women weep.

Mary Star of the Sea!
Give wife and mother joy
In husband and in boy,
Mary Star of the Sea!

With intercession save,
Mary Star of the Sea!
Mary Star of the Sea!
These children of the wave.

Mary Star of the Sea!
Pour peace upon the wild
Waves, make their murmurs mild,
Mary Star of the Sea!

Now in thy mercy pray,
Mary Star of the Sea!
Mary Star of the Sea!
For sailors far away.

Mary Star of the Sea! 25
Now be thy great prayers said
For all poor seamen dead,
Mary Star of the Sea!
(1892)

## THE PRECEPT OF SILENCE

I know you: solitary griefs,
Desolate passions, aching hours!
I know you: tremulous beliefs,
Agonized hopes, and ashen flowers!

The winds are sometimes sad to me; 5
The starry spaces, full of fear;
Mine is the sorrow on the sea,
And mine the sigh of places drear.

Some players upon plaintive strings
Publish their wistfulness abroad: 10
I have not spoken of these things,
Save to one man, and unto God.
(1893)

---

20. **David said.** See *Psalms*, 104: 24-26.—"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein." Cf. *Psalms*, 107: 23-30. 29. **Glaucus,** in Greek mythology a fisherman and diver who leaped into the sea and rose from it changed into a sea-god; see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 13:906 ff.

*Section* 2. 5. See *Revelation*, 21:23—"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

## THE DARK ANGEL

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust
To rid the world of penitence;
Malicious Angel, who still dost
My soul such subtile violence!

Because of thee, no thought, no thing,
Abides for me undesecrate:
Dark Angel, ever on the wing,
Who never reachest me too late!

When music sounds, then changest thou
Its silvery to a sultry fire;
Nor will thine envious heart allow
Delight untortured by desire.

Through thee, the gracious Muses turn
To Furies, O mine Enemy!
And all the things of beauty burn
With flames of evil ecstasy.

Because of thee, the land of dreams
Becomes a gathering place of fears,
Until tormented slumber seems
One vehemence of useless tears.

When sunlight glows upon the flowers,
Or ripples down the dancing sea,
Thou, with thy troop of passionate powers,
Beleaguerest, bewilderest, me.

Within the breath of autumn woods,
Within the wintry silences,
Thy venomous spirit stirs and broods,
O Master of impieties!

The ardor of red flame is thine,
And thine the steely soul of ice;
Thou poisonest the fair design
Of nature, with unfair device.

Apples of ashes, golden bright;
Waters of bitterness, how sweet!
O banquet of a foul delight,
Prepared by thee, dark Paraclete!

Thou art the whisper in the gloom,
The hinting tone, the haunting laugh;
Thou art the adorner of my tomb,
The minstrel of mine epitaph.

I fight thee, in the Holy Name!
Yet, what thou dost, is what God saith;
Tempter! should I escape thy flame,
Thou wilt have helped my soul from Death —

The second Death, that never dies,
That cannot die, when time is dead;
Live Death, wherein the lost soul cries,
Eternally uncomforted.

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust!
Of two defeats, of two despairs:
Less dread, a change to drifting dust,
Than thine eternity of cares.

Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not so,
Dark Angel! triumph over me:
*Lonely, unto the Lone I go;*
*Divine, to the Divinity.* (1893)

## THE RED WIND

Red Wind from out the East,
Red Wind of blight and blood!
Ah, when wilt thou have ceased
Thy bitter, stormy flood?

Red Wind from over sea,
Scourging our lonely land!
What Angel loosened thee
Out of his iron hand?

Red Wind! whose word of might
Winged thee with wings of flame?
O fire of mournful night,
What is thy master's name?

Red Wind! who bade thee burn,
Branding our hearts? Who bade
Thee on and never turn,
Till waste our souls were laid?

Red Wind! from out the West
Pour winds of Paradise,
Winds of eternal rest,
That weary souls entice.

Wind of the East! Red Wind!
Thou witherest the soft breath
Of Paradise the kind,
Red Wind of burning death!

O Red Wind! hear God's voice;
Hear thou, and fall, and cease.
Let Inisfail rejoice
In her Hesperian peace. (1894)

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*The Dark Angel.* 4. **subtile**, insidious. 13-14. **Muses . . . Furies.** See note on Meredith's *Hard Weather*, 29-30, page 603. 36. **Paraclete**, advocate—a term applied by St. John to the Holy Spirit as man's guardian angel, but by Johnson to his dark angel.

*The Red Wind.* 27. **Inisfail**, Ireland. 28. **Hesperian peace**, that of the Hesperian gardens, situated either beyond the setting sun or beyond the north wind, in perpetual sunshine and happiness.

## ERNEST DOWSON
## (1867-1900)

### NUNS OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION

Calm, sad, secure; behind high convent walls,
These watch the sacred lamp, these watch and pray
And it is one with them when evening falls;
And one with them the cold return of day.

These heed not time; their nights and days they make
Into a long, returning rosary,
Whereon their lives are threaded for Christ's sake;
Meekness and vigilance and chastity.

A vowed patrol, in silent companies,
Life-long they keep before the living Christ.
In the dim church, their prayers and penances
Are fragrant incense to the Sacrificed.

Outside, the world is wild and passionate;
Man's weary laughter and his sick despair
Entreat at their impenetrable gate;
They heed no voices in their dream of prayer.

They saw the glory of the world displayed;
They saw the bitter of it, and the sweet;
They knew the roses of the world should fade,
And be trod under by the hurrying feet.

Therefore they rather put away desire,
And crossed their hands and came to sanctuary
And veiled their heads and put on coarse attire:
Because their comeliness was vanity.

And there they rest; they have serene insight
Of the illuminating dawn to be;
Mary's sweet Star dispels for them the night,
The proper darkness of humanity.

Calm, sad, secure; with faces worn and mild:
Surely their choice of vigil is the best?
Yea! for our roses fade, the world is wild;
But there, beside the altar, there, is rest.

(1891)

### VITÆ SUMMA BREVIS SPEM NOS VETAT INCOHARE LONGAM

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate;
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses;
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

(1896)

### NON SUM QUALIS ERAM BONÆ SUB REGNO CYNARÆ

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine;
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, I was desolated and bowed my head —
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

All night upon mine heart I felt her warm heart beat,
Night-long within mine arms in love and sleep she lay;
Surely the kisses of her bought red mouth were sweet;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
When I awoke and found the dawn was gray —
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

I have forgot much, Cynara! gone with the wind,
Flung roses, roses riotously with the throng,
Dancing, to put thy pale, lost lilies out of mind;
But I was desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, all the time, because the dance was long —
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

*Vitæ Summa Brevis Spem Nos Vetat Incohare Longam.* The title means *The Short Span of Life Forbids Us to Encourage Prolonged Hope* (Horace, *Odes*, Book 1, Ode 4, line 15).

*Non Sum Qualis Eram Bonæ Sub Regno Cynaræ.* The title means *I Am Not What Once I Was in Kind Cynara's Day* (Horace, *Odes*, Book 4, Ode 1, lines 3-4). Dowson takes the name of the lady from Horace, but develops a wholly different idea.

I cried for madder music and for stronger wine,
But when the feast is finished and the lamps expire,
Then falls thy shadow, Cynara! the night is thine;
And I am desolate and sick of an old passion,
Yea, hungry for the lips of my desire:
I have been faithful to thee, Cynara! in my fashion.

(1896)

## AMOR PROFANUS

Beyond the pale of memory,
In some mysterious dusky grove,
A place of shadows utterly,
Where never coos the turtle-dove,
A world forgotten of the sun,
I dreamed we met when day was done,
And marveled at our ancient love.

Met there by chance, long kept apart,
We wandered through the darkling glades;
And that old language of the heart
We sought to speak.— alas! poor shades!
Over our pallid lips had run
The waters of oblivion,
Which crown all loves of men or maids.

In vain we stammered; from afar
Our old desire shone cold and dead,
That time was distant as a star,
When eyes were bright and lips were red.
And still we went with downcast eye
And no delight in being nigh,
Poor shadows most uncomforted.

Ah, Lalage! while life is ours,
Hoard not thy beauty rose and white,
But pluck the pretty, fleeting flowers
That deck our little path of light:
For all too soon we twain shall tread
The bitter pastures of the dead —
Estranged, sad specters of the night.

## YVONNE OF BRITTANY

In your mother's apple orchard,
Just a year ago, last spring —
Do you remember, Yvonne!
The dear trees lavishing
Rain of their starry blossoms
To make you a coronet?
Do you remember, Yvonne?
As I remember yet.

In your mother's apple orchard,
When the world was left behind:
You were shy, so shy, Yvonne!
But your eyes were calm and kind.
We spoke of the apple harvest,
When the cider press is set,
And such-like trifles, Yvonne!
That doubtless you forget.

In the still, soft Breton twilight,
We were silent; words were few,
Till your mother came out chiding,
For the grass was bright with dew.
But I know your heart was beating,
Like a fluttered, frightened dove.
Do you ever remember, Yvonne?
That first faint flush of love?

In the fullness of midsummer,
When the apple-bloom was shed,
Oh, brave was your surrender,
Though shy the words you said.
I was so glad, so glad, Yvonne!
To have led you home at last;
Do you ever remember, Yvonne!
How swiftly the days passed?

In your mother's apple orchard
It is grown too dark to stray,
There is none to chide you, Yvonne!
You are over-far away.
There is dew on your grave grass, Yvonne!
But your feet it shall not wet —
No, you never remember, Yvonne!
And I shall soon forget.

(1896)

## YOU WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD ME

Ah, dans ces mornes séjours
Les jamais sont les toujours
— *Paul Verlaine.*

You would have understood me, had you waited;
I could have loved you, dear! as well as he —
Had we not been impatient, dear! and fated
Always to disagree.

---

*Amor Profanus.* The title means *Profane Love.* The distinction between sacred and profane love—the spiritual and the physical—is one made by Plato and Spenser. It is the theme of one of Titian's famous paintings.

21. **Lalage,** a lady who is the subject of Horace's fifth Ode, Book 2. 23-24. **Hoard . . . flowers.** Cf. Herrick's *Gather Ye Rosebuds While Ye May* and the *Carpe Diem* of Horace, *Odes,* Book 1, Ode 11.

*Yvonne of Brittany.* Brittany is a province in the northwestern part of France, originally a Celtic kingdom.

17. **Breton,** of Brittany.

*You Would Have Understood Me.* "Ah, in these dreary regions, never is forever." Paul Verlaine was a French lyric poet (1844-96) much admired by Dowson; the quotation is from *Reversibilités.*

What is the use of speech? Silence were fitter:
Lest we should still be wishing things unsaid.
Though all the words we ever spake were bitter,
Shall I reproach you dead?

Nay, let this earth, your portion, likewise cover
All the old anger, setting us apart:
Always, in all, in truth was I your lover;
Always, I held your heart.

I have met other women who were tender,
As you were cold, dear! with a grace as rare.
Think you I turned to them, or made surrender,
I who had found you fair?

Had we been patient, dear! ah, had you waited,
I had fought death for you, better than he;
But from the very first, dear! we were fated
Always to disagree.

Late, late, I come to you, now death discloses
Love that in life was not to be our part;
On your low lying mound between the roses,
Sadly I cast my heart.

I would not waken you — nay! this is fitter;
Death and the darkness give you unto me;
Here we who loved so, were so cold and bitter,
Hardly can disagree. (1896)

## BEATA SOLITUDO

What land of Silence,
Where pale stars shine
On apple-blossom
And dew-drenched vine,
Is yours and mine?

The silent valley
That we will find,
Where all the voices
Of humankind
Are left behind.

There all forgetting,
Forgotten quite,
We will repose us,
With our delight
Hid out of sight.

The world forsaken,
And out of mind
Honor and labor,
We shall not find
The stars unkind.

And men shall travail,
And laugh and weep;
But we have vistas
Of gods asleep,
With dreams as deep.

A land of Silence,
Where pale stars shine
On apple-blossoms
And dew-drenched vine,
Be yours and mine! (1896)

## GRAY NIGHTS

Awhile we wandered (thus it is I dream!)
Through a long, sandy track of No Man's Land,
Where only poppies grew among the sand,
The which we, plucking, cast with scant esteem,
And ever sadlier, into the sad stream,
Which followed us, as we went, hand in hand,
Under the estrangèd stars, a road unplanned,
Seeing all things in the shadow of a dream.
And ever sadlier, as the stars expired,
We found the poppies rarer, till thine eyes
Grown all my light, to light me were too tired,
And at their darkening, that no surmise
Might haunt me of the lost days we desired,
After them all I flung those memories! (1896)

## CHANSON SANS PAROLES

In the deep violet air,
Not a leaf is stirred;
There is no sound heard,
But afar, the rare
Trilled voice of a bird.

Is the wood's dim heart,
And the fragrant pine,
Incense, and a shrine
Of her coming? Apart,
I wait for a sign.

What the sudden hush said,
She will hear, and forsake,

---

*Beata Solitudo.* The title means *Blessed Solitude.*

*Gray Nights.* 3. **poppies.** The poppy is the flower of oblivion.

*Chanson sans Paroles.* The title means *A Song without Words.* It was frequently given by Mendelssohn (1809-47), famous German musical composer, to his compositions.

Swift, for my sake,
Her green, grassy bed —
She will hear and awake!

She will hearken and glide,
From her place of deep rest,
Dove-eyed, with the breast
Of a dove, to my side;
The pines bow their crest.

I wait for a sign:
The leaves to be waved,
The tall tree-tops laved
In a flood of sunshine,
This world to be saved!

*In the deep violet air,*
*Not a leaf is stirred;*
*There is no sound heard,*
*But afar, the rare*
*Trilled voice of a bird.* (1896)

## CARTHUSIANS

Through what long heaviness, assayed in what strange fire,
Have these white monks been brought into the way of peace,
Despising the world's wisdom and the world's desire,
Which from the body of this death bring no release?

Within their austere walls no voices penetrate;
A sacred silence only, as of death, obtains;
Nothing finds entry here of loud or passionate;
This quiet is the exceeding profit of their pains.

From many lands they came, in divers fiery ways;
Each knew at last the vanity of earthly joys;
And one was crowned with thorns, and one was crowned with bays,
And each was tired at last of the world's foolish noise.

It was not theirs with Dominic to preach God's holy wrath,
They were too stern to bear sweet Francis' gentle sway;
Theirs was a higher calling and a steeper path,
To dwell alone with Christ, to meditate and pray.

A cloistered company, they are companionless,
None knoweth here the secret of his brother's heart:
They are but come together for more loneliness,
Whose bond is solitude and silence all their part.

O beatific life! Who is there shall gainsay,
Your great refusal's victory, your little loss,
Deserting vanity for the more perfect way,
The sweeter service of the most dolorous Cross.

Ye shall prevail at last! Surely ye shall prevail!
Your silence and austerity shall win at last;
Desire and mirth, the world's ephemeral lights shall fail,
The sweet star of your queen is never overcast.

We fling up flowers and laugh, we laugh across the wine;
With wine we dull our souls and careful strains of art;
Our cups are polished skulls round which the roses twine:
None dares to look at Death who leers and lurks apart.

Move on, white company, whom that has not sufficed!
Our viols cease, our wine is death, our roses fail:
Pray for our heedlessness, O dwellers with the Christ!
Though the world fall apart, surely ye shall prevail. (1899)

## VILLANELLE OF THE POET'S ROAD

Wine and woman and song,
Three things garnish our way;
Yet is day over long.

---

*Carthusians.* The Carthusians are an order of monks founded by St. Bruno in 1084; they wear white robes, observe strict discipline, and live as hermits in separate dwellings within the common walls.

11. **bays,** laurel wreaths emblematic of fame won in the world before entrance into the monastery. 13. **Dominic,** founder (1216) of the Dominican order of Black Friars, distinguished for their ability as preachers and theologians.

14. **Francis,** St. Francis of Assisi, founder (1210) of the Franciscan order of Grey Friars, who vow themselves to the imitation of Christ in gentleness and poverty.

*Villanelle of the Poet's Road.* A villanelle is an old French lyric form characterized by the set repetition of lines; compare Dobson's *On a Nankin Plate,* page 766.

Lest we do our youth wrong,
Gather them while we may:
Wine and woman and song.

Three things render us strong,
Vine leaves, kisses, and bay;
Yet is day over long.

Unto us they belong,
Us the bitter and gay,
Wine and woman and song.

We, as we pass along,
Are sad that they will not stay;
Yet is day over long.

Fruits and flowers among,
What is better than they:
Wine and woman and song?
Yet is day over long. (1899)

## TO ONE IN BEDLAM

With delicate, mad hands, behind his sordid bars,
Surely he hath his posies, which they tear and twine;
Those scentless wisps of straw, that miserably line
His strait, caged universe, whereat the dull world stares,
Pedant and pitiful. Oh, how his rapt gaze wars
With their stupidity! Know they what dreams divine
Lift his long, laughing reveries like enchanted wine,
And make his melancholy germane to the stars?
O lamentable brother! if those pity thee,
Am I not fain of all thy lone eyes promise me;
Half a fool's kingdom, far from men who sow and reap,
All their days, vanity? Better than mortal flowers,
Thy moon-kissed roses seem: better than love or sleep,
The star-crowned solitude of thine oblivious hours! (1899)

## A LAST WORD

Let us go hence — the night is now at hand;
The day is overworn, the birds all flown;
And we have reaped the crops the gods have sown,
Despair and death; deep darkness o'er the land,
Broods like an owl; we cannot understand
Laughter or tears, for we have only known
Surpassing vanity: vain things alone
Have driven our perverse and aimless band.

Let us go hence, somewhither strange and cold,
To Hollow Lands where just men and unjust
Find end of labor, where's rest for the old,
Freedom to all from love and fear and lust.
Twine our torn hands! O pray the earth enfold
Our life-sick hearts and turn them into dust. (1899)

## JOHN DAVIDSON (1857-1909)

### TO THE NEW WOMEN

Free to look at fact,
Free to come and go,
Free to think and act,
Now you surely know
The wrongs of womanhead
At last are fairly dead.

Abler than man to vex,
Less able to be good,
Fiercer in your sex,
Wilder in your mood,
Seeking — who knows what?
About the world you grope;
Some of you have thought
Man may be your hope.

Soon again you'll see,
Love and love alone,
As simple as can be,
Can make this life atone.

Be bold and yet be bold,
But be not overbold,
Although the knell is tolled
Of the tyranny of old.

And meet your splendid doom,
On heaven-scaling wings,
Women, from whose bright womb
The radiant future springs! (1894)

### TO THE NEW MEN

Heat the furnace hot;
Smelt the things of thought
Into dross and dew;
Mold the world anew.

---

8. **bay,** the laurel-wreath won for excellence in song.

*A Last Word.* 1. **Let . . . hence.** Cf. Swinburne's *A Leave-Taking,* line 1 (p. 675).

*To the New Women.* 19-20. **Be bold . . . overbold.** "Be bold, be bold, but not too bold" is the inscription over the door of the robber's castle in the old English folk-tale *Mr. Fox.*

More than earth and sea
Is a heart and eye;
Gird yourselves and try
All the powers that be.

Wicked, cease at once
Troubling; wearied eyes,
Rest you now while suns
Dawn and moons arise.
'Stablish heaven today;
Cleanse the beast-marked brow;
Wipe all tears away.
Don't — do it now!

Love, and hope, and know;
Man — you must adore him.
Let the whole past go,
Think God's thought before Him.

Knowledge is power? Above
All else, knowledge is love.

Heat the furnace hot;
Smelt the world-old thought
Into dross and dew;
Mold the earth anew.
(1894)

## A BALLAD OF HEAVEN

He wrought at one great work for years;
The world passed by with lofty look.
Sometimes his eyes were dashed with tears;
Sometimes his lips with laughter shook.

His wife and child went clothed in rags,
And in a windy garret starved;
He trod his measures on the flags,
And high in heaven his music carved.

Wistful he grew, but never feared;
For always on the midnight skies
His rich orchestral score appeared
In stars and zones and galaxies.

He thought to copy down his score;
The moonlight was his lamp; he said,
"Listen, my love"; but on the floor
His wife and child were lying dead.

Her hollow eyes were open wide;
He deemed she heard with special zest:
Her death's-head infant coldly eyed
The desert of her shrunken breast.

"Listen, my love; my work is done;
I tremble as I touch the page
To sign the sentence of the sun
And crown the great eternal age.

"The slow *adagio* begins;
The winding-sheets are raveled out
That swathe the minds of men, the sins
That wrap their rotting souls about.

"The dead are heralded along;
With silver trumps and golden drums,
And flutes and oboes, keen and strong,
My brave *andante* singing comes.

"Then like a python's sumptuous dress
The frame of things is cast away,
And out of Time's obscure distress
The thundering *scherzo* crashes Day.

"For three great orchestras I hope
My mighty music shall be scored;
On three high hills they shall have scope
With heaven's vault for a sounding-board.

"Sleep well, love; let your eyelids fall;
Cover the child; good-night, and if . . .
What? Speak . . . the traitorous end of all!
Both . . . cold and hungry . . . cold and stiff!

"But no, God means us well, I trust:
Dear ones, be happy, hope is nigh:
We are too young to fall to dust,
And too unsatisfied to die."

He lifted up against his breast
The woman's body, stark and wan;
And to her withered bosom pressed
The little skin-clad skeleton.

"You see you are alive," he cried.
He rocked them gently to and fro.
"No, no, my love, you have not died;
Nor you, my little fellow; no."

Long in his arms he strained his dead
And crooned an antique lullaby;
Then laid them on the lowly bed,
And broke down with a doleful cry.

"The love, the hope, the blood, the brain,
Of her and me, the budding life,
And my great music — all in vain!
My unscored work, my child, my wife!

"We drop into oblivion,
And nourish some suburban sod:

---

14. **beast-marked,** marked by Antichrist. See *Revelation,* 19:20.—"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image."

*A Ballad of Heaven.* 7. **flags,** paving stones. 12. **zones,** divisions of the heavens by astronomical parallels. **galaxies,** such swarms of stars as the Milky Way.

25, 32, 36. **adagio, andante, scherzo,** movements in a symphony: slow, moderately rapid, and quick; cf. Henley's *London Voluntaries,* page 788. 64. **unscored work,** unwritten music.

My work, this woman, this my son,
Are now no more: there is no God.
The world's a dustbin; we are due,
And death's cart waits: be life accurst!"

He stumbled down beside the two,
And clasping them, his great heart burst.
Straightway he stood at heaven's gate,
Abashed and trembling for his sin;
I trow he had not long to wait,
For God came out and let him in.

And then there ran a radiant pair,
Ruddy with haste and eager-eyed,
To meet him first upon the stair—
His wife and child beatified.

They clad him in a robe of light,
And gave him heavenly food to eat;
Great seraphs praised him to the height,
Archangels sat about his feet.

God, smiling, took him by the hand,
And led him to the brink of heaven;
He saw where systems whirling stand,
Where galaxies like snow are driven.

Dead silence reigned; a shudder ran
Through space; Time furled his wearied wings;
A slow *adagio* then began,
Sweetly resolving troubled things.

The dead were heard [illegible];
As if with drums and trumps of flame,
And flutes and oboes keen and strong,
A brave *andante* singing came;

Then like a python's sumptuous dress
The frame of things was cast away,
And out of Time's obscure distress
The conquering *scherzo* thundered Day.

He doubted; but God said, "Even so;
Nothing is lost that's wrought with tears:
The music that you made below
Is now the music of the spheres."
(1894)

## A BALLAD OF HELL

"A letter from my love today!
Oh, unexpected, dear appeal!"
She struck a happy tear away,
And broke the crimson seal.

"My love, there is no help on earth,
No help in heaven; the dead-man's bell
Must toll our wedding; our first hearth
Must be the well-paved floor of hell."

The color died from out her face,
Her eyes like ghostly candles shone;
She cast dread looks about the place,
Then clenched her teeth and read right on.

"I may not pass the prison door;
Here must I rot from day to day,
Unless I wed whom I abhor,
My cousin, Blanche of Valencay.

"At midnight with my dagger keen,
I'll take my life; it must be so.
Meet me in hell tonight, my queen,
For weal and woe."

She laughed although her face was wan,
She girded on her golden belt,
She took her jeweled ivory fan,
And at her glowing missal knelt.

Then rose, "And am I mad?" she said.
She broke her fan, her belt untied;
With leather girt herself instead,
And stuck a dagger at her side.

She waited, shuddering in her room,
Till sleep had fallen on all the house.
She never flinched, she faced her doom:
The two must sin to keep their vows.

Then out into the night she went,
And stooping crept by hedge and tree;
Her rose-bush flung a snare of scent,
And caught a happy memory.

She fell, and lay a minute's space;
She tore the sward in her distress;
The dewy grass refreshed her face;
She rose and ran with lifted dress.

She started like a morn-caught ghost
Once when the moon came out and stood
To watch; the naked road she crossed,
And dived into the murmuring wood.

The branches snatched her streaming cloak;
A live thing shrieked; she made no stay!
She hurried to the trysting oak—
Right well she knew the way.

Without a pause she bared her breast,
And drove her dagger home and fell,

---

83. **seraphs,** angels of a superior order. 104. **music of the spheres.** The ancients believed that the stars made music as their spheres revolved.

24. **missal,** a book of the Mass. 41. **morn-caught ghost.** According to folk-belief, spirits may wander abroad in the hours of darkness, but must return to their graves before dawn on penalty of infinite torture. See the folk-ballad *The Wife of Usher's Well.*

And lay like one that takes her rest,
And died and wakened up in hell.

She bathed her spirit in the flame,
And near the center took her post;
From all sides to her ears there came,
The dreary anguish of the lost.

The devil started at her side,
Comely, and tall, and black as jet.
"I am young Malespina's bride;
Has he come hither yet?"

"My poppet, welcome to your bed."
"Is Malespina here?"
"Not he! Tomorrow he must wed
His cousin Blanche, my dear!"

"You lie, he died with me tonight."
"Not he! it was a plot." "You lie."
"My dear, I never lie outright."
"We died at midnight, he and I."

The devil went. Without a groan
She, gathered up in one fierce prayer,
Took root in hell's midst all alone,
And waited for him there.

She dared to make herself at home
Amidst the wail, the uneasy stir.
The blood-stained flame that filled the dome,
Scentless and silent, shrouded her.

How long she stayed I cannot tell;
But when she felt his perfidy,
She marched across the floor of hell;
And all the damned stood up to see.

The devil stopped her at the brink.
She shook him off; she cried, "Away!"
"My dear, you have gone mad, I think."
"I was betrayed; — I will not stay."

Across the weltering deep she ran;
A stranger thing was never seen:
The damned stood silent to a man;
They saw the great gulf set between.

To her it seemed a meadow fair;
And flowers sprang up about her feet;
She entered heaven; she climbed the stair;
And knelt down at the mercy-seat.

Seraphs and saints with one great voice
Welcomed that soul that knew not fear;
Amazed to find it could rejoice,
Hell raised a hoarse half-human cheer.

(1894)

## THIRTY BOB A WEEK

I couldn't touch a stop and turn a screw,
And set the blooming world a-work for me,
Like such as cut their teeth — I hope, like you —
On the handle of a skeleton gold key;
I cut mine on a leek, which I eat it every week;
I'm a clerk at thirty bob, as you can see.

But I don't allow it's luck and all a toss;
There's no such thing as being starred and crossed;
It's just the power of some to be a boss,
And the bally power of others to be bossed.
I face the music, sir; you bet I ain't a cur;
Strike me lucky if I don't believe I'm lost!

For like a mole I journey in the dark,
A-traveling along the underground
From my Pillared Halls and broad Suburban Park,
To come the daily dull official round;
And home again at night with my pipe all alight,
A-scheming how to count ten bob a pound.

And it's often very cold and wet,
And my missis stitches towels for a hunks;
And the Pillared Halls is half of it to let —
Three rooms about the size of traveling trunks.
And we cough, my wife and I, to dislocate a sigh,
When the noisy little kids are in their bunks.

But you never hear her do a growl or whine,
For she's made of flint and roses, very odd;
And I've got to cut my meaning rather fine,
Or I'd blubber, for I'm made of greens and sod.
So p'r'aps we are in Hell for all that I can tell,
And lost and damned and served up hot to God.

I ain't blaspheming, Mr. Silver-tongue;
I'm saying things a bit beyond your art.
Of all the rummy starts you ever sprung,
Thirty bob a week's the rummiest start!
With your science and your books and your the'ries about spooks,
Did you ever hear of looking in your heart?

I didn't mean your pocket, Mr., no —
I mean that having children and a wife,

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61. **poppet,** darling. 93. **seraphs,** angels of a superior order.

*Thirty Bob a Week.* A bob is a shilling—about twenty-five cents.
10. **bally,** an intensifying adjective without definite meaning. 18. **count . . . pound,** make ten shillings go as far as a pound (twenty shillings). 20. **hunks,** stingy old man.

With thirty bob on which to come and go,
Isn't dancing to the tabor and the fife;
When it doesn't make you drink, by Heaven! it makes you think,
And notice curious items about life.

I step into my heart and there I meet
A god-almighty devil singing small,
Who would like to shout and whistle in the street,
And squelch the passers flat against the wall;
If the whole world was a cake he had the power to take,
He would take it, ask for more, and eat it all.

And I meet a sort of simpleton beside,
The kind that life is always giving beans;
With thirty bob a week to keep a bride
He fell in love and married in his teens.
At thirty bob he stuck; but he knows it isn't luck;
He knows the seas are deeper than tureens.

And the god-almighty devil and the fool
That meet me in the High Street on the strike,
When I walk about my heart a-gathering wool,
Are my good and evil angels if you like.
And both of them together in every kind of weather
Ride me like a double-seated bike.

That's rough a bit and needs its meaning curled.
But I have a high old hot un in my mind —
A most engrugious notion of the world,
That leaves your lightning 'rithmetic behind:
I give it at a glance when I say "There ain't no chance,
Nor nothing of the lucky-lottery kind."

And it's this way that I make it out to be:
No fathers, mothers, countries, climates — none;
Not Adam was responsible for me,
Nor society, nor systems, nary one;
A little sleeping seed, I woke — I did, indeed —
A million years before the blooming sun.

I woke because I thought the time had come;
Beyond my will there was no other cause;
And everywhere I found myself at home,
Because I chose to be the thing I was;
And in whatever shape of mollusc or of ape
I always went according to the laws.

I was the love that chose my mother out;
I joined two lives and from the union burst;
My weakness and my strength without a doubt
Are mine alone forever from the first;
It's just the very same with a difference in the name
As "Thy will be done." You say it if you durst!

They say it daily up and down the land
As easy as you take a drink, it's true;
But the difficultest go to understand,
And the difficultest job a man can do,
Is to come it brave and meek with thirty bob a week,
And feel that that's the proper thing for you.

It's a naked child against a hungry wolf;
It's playing bowls upon a splitting wreck;
It's walking on a string across a gulf
With millstones fore-and-aft about your neck;
But the thing is daily done by many and many a one;
And we fall, face downward, fighting, on the deck.

(1894)

## LONDON

Athwart the sky a lowly sigh
From west to east the sweet wind carried;
The sun stood still on Primrose Hill;
His light in all the city tarried;
The clouds on viewless columns bloomed
Like smoldering lilies unconsumed.

"Oh, sweetheart, see! How shadowy,
Of some occult magician's rearing,
Or swung in space of heaven's grace
Dissolving, dimly reappearing,
Afloat upon ethereal tides
St. Paul's above the city rides!"

A rumor broke through the thin smoke,
Enwreathing abbey, tower, and palace,
The parks, the squares, the thoroughfares,
The million-peopled lanes and alleys,
An ever-muttering prisoned storm,
The heart of London beating warm.

(1894)

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63. **engrugious**, egregious, extraordinary.

*London*. 3. **Primrose Hill**, a hill in the northwest section of London, near Regent's Park. 12. **St. Paul's**, the cathedral of London, in the "city," or business section.

## MIDSUMMER DAY

BASIL SANDY HERBERT

*Sandy.* I cannot write, I cannot think;
'Tis half delight and half distress;
My memory stumbles on the brink
Of some unfathomed happiness —

Of some old happiness divine,
What haunting scent, what haunting note,
What word, or what melodious line,
Sends my heart throbbing to my throat?

*Basil.* What? thrilled with happiness today,
The longest day in all the year, 10
Which we must spend in making hay
By thrashing straw in Fleet Street here!

What scent? what sound? The odor stale
Of watered streets; the bruit loud
Of hoof and wheel on road and rail, 15
The rush and trample of the crowd!

*Herbert.* Humming the song of many a lark,
Out of the sea, across the shires,
The west wind blows about the park,
And faintly stirs the Fleet Street wires. 20

Perhaps it sows the happy seed
That blossoms in your memory;
Certain of many a western mead,
And hill and stream it speaks to me;

With rosy showers of apple-bloom 25
The orchard sward is mantled deep;
Shaded in some sequestered coomb
The red deer in the Quantocks sleep.

*Basil.* [illegible]
Till I forget the wilderness 30
Of sooty brick, the dusty smell,
The jangle of the printing-press.

*Herbert.* I hear the woodman's measured stroke;
I see the amber streamlet glide —
Above, the green gold of the oak, 35
Fledges the gorge on either side.

A thatched roof shines athwart the gloom
Of the high moorland's darksome ground;
Far off the surging rollers boom,
And fill the shadowy wood with sound. 40

*Basil.* You have pronounced the magic sign!
The city with its thousand years,
Like some embodied [illegible] divine,
[illegible], prodigious, disappears.

I stand upon a lowly bridge, 45
Moss-grown beside the old Essex home;
Over the distant purple ridge
The clouds arise in sultry foam;

In many a cluster, wreath, and chain,
A silvery vapor hangs on high, 50
And snowy scarfs of silken grain
Bedeck the blue slopes of the sky;

The wandering water sighs and calls,
And breaks into a chant that rings
Beneath the vaulted bridge, then falls, 55
And under heaven softly sings;

A light wind lingers here and there,
And whispers in an unknown tongue
The passionate secrets of the air
That never may by man be sung; 60

Low, low, it whispers; stays, and goes;
It comes again, again takes flight,
And like a subtle presence grows
And almost gathers into sight.

*Sandy.* The wind that stirs the Fleet Street wires, 65
And roams and quests about the park,
That wanders all across the shires,
Humming the song of many a lark —

The wind — it is the wind, whose breath,
Perfumed with roses, wakes in me 70
From shrouded slumbers deep as death
A yet unfaded memory.

*Basil.* About midsummer, every year,
Ten thousand roses open blush,
The latest of the rosy bower, 75
And rosy odors haunt and flush

The winds of heaven up and down,
On the top-gallant of the air
The lark, the pressman in the town
Breathe only rosy incense rare. 80

*Sandy.* And I, enchanted by the rose,
Remember when I first began
To know what in its bosom glows
Exhaling scent ambrosian.

A child, at home in streets and quays, 85
The grimy [illegible] rain;
I only knew of tarnished trees,
And skies corroding vapors stain;

One summer — Time upon my head
Had showered the curls of years eleven —
Me, for a month, good fortune led 91
Where trees are green and hills kiss heaven.

(1894)

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*Midsummer Day.* 12. **Fleet Street,** a London thoroughfare; see Henley's *London Voluntaries*, page 788. 14. **bruit,** noise, clamor. 27. **coomb,** a narrow valley between rocky hills. 28. **Quantocks,** the Quantock Hills, a low range in Somersetshire, southwestern England, associated with the early poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

By glen and mountain, moor and lawn,
  Burn-side and sheep-path, day and night,
I wandered, gathered like a bird
  All sense, all wonder, all delight.
And once at eve I climbed a hill,
  Burning to see the sun appear,
And watched the jewelled darkness fill
  With lamps and clustered tapers clear.
At last the strongest stars were spent;
  A glimmering shadow overcame
The swarthy-purple firmament,
  And throbbed and kindled into flame;
The pallid day, the trembling day
  Put off her saffron wedding-dress,
And watched her bridegroom far away
  Soar through the starry wilderness.

I clasped my hands and closed my eyes,
  And tears relieved my ecstasy.
I dared not watch the sun arise,
  Nor knew what magic daunted me;
And yet the roses seemed to tell
  More than the morn, had I but known
The meaning of the fragrant smell
  That bound me with a subtle zone.

But in the gloaming when we played
  At hide-and-seek, and I with her
Behind a rose-bush hid, afraid
  To meet her gaze, to breathe, or stir,
The dungeon of my sense was riven,
  The beauty of the world laid bare,
A great wind caught me up to heaven
  Upon a cloud of golden hair,
And mouth touched mouth, and love was
      born;
  And when our wondering vision blent,
We found the meaning of the morn,
  The meaning of the rose's scent.

Ah me! ah me! since then! since then!
  *Herbert.* Nay, nay, let self-reproaches be!
Now that this thought is throned again,
  Be zealous for its sovereignty.

*Basil.* And brave, great Nature must be
      thanked
  And we must worship on our knees,
And hold forever sacrosanct
  Such dewy memories as these. (1895)

## THE MERCHANTMAN

*The Markethaunters*

Now, while our money is piping hot
  From the mint of our toil that coins the
      sheaves,
Merchantman, merchantman, what have you
      got
  In your tabernacle hung with leaves?
      What have you got?
        The sun rides high;
      Our money is hot;
        We must buy, buy, buy!

*The Merchantman*

I come from the elfin king's demesne
  With chrysolite, hyacinth, tourmaline;
I have emeralds here of living green;
  I have rubies, each like a cup of wine;
And diamonds, diamonds that never have
      been
  Outshone by eyes the most divine!

*The Markethaunters*

Jewelry? — Baubles; bad for the soul,
  Desire of the heart and lust of the eye!
Diamonds, indeed! We wanted coal.
  What else do you sell? Come, sound your
      cry!
      Our money is hot,
        The night draws nigh;
      What have you got
        That we want to buy?

*The Merchantman*

I have here enshrined the soul of the rose
  Exhaled in the land of the daystar's birth;
I have casks whose golden staves enclose
  Eternal youth, eternal mirth;
And cordials that bring repose,
  And the tranquil night, and the end of the
      earth.

*The Markethaunters*

Rapture of wine? But it never pays;
  We must keep our common-sense alert.
Raisins are healthier, medicine says —
  Raisins and almonds for dessert.
      But we want to buy;
        For our money is hot,
      And age draws nigh.
        What else have you got?

*The Merchantman*

I have lamps that gild the luster of noon;
  Shadowy arrows that pierce the brain; . . .

---

93. **lawn**, glade. 94. **Burn-side**, brook-side. 116. **zone**, girdle. 135. **sacrosanct**, inexpressibly sacred.

*Eclogue: The Merchantman.* 10. **chrysolite . . . tourmaline**, semiprecious stones: olive-green, bluish violet, and varicolored.

Dulcimers strung with beams of the moon;
Psalteries fashioned of pleasure and pain;
A song and a sword and a haunting tune
That may never be offered the world again.

*The Markethaunters*

Dulcimers! psalteries! Whom do you mock?
Arrows and songs? We have axes to grind!
Shut up your booth and your moldering stock,
For we never shall deal. — Come away; let us find
What the others have got!
We must buy, buy, buy;
For our money is hot,
And death draws nigh.

(1899)

## A RUNNABLE STAG

When the pods went pop on the broom, green broom,
And apples began to be golden-skinned,
We harbored a stag in the Priory coomb,
And we feathered his trail up-wind, up-wind,
We feathered his trail up-wind —
A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
A runnable stag, a kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
A stag, a runnable stag.

Then the huntsman's horn rang yap, yap, yap,
And "Forwards" we heard the harborer shout;
But 'twas only a brocket that broke a gap
In the beechen underwood, driven out,
From the underwood antlered out.
By warrant and might of the stag, the stag,
The runnable stag, whose lordly mind
Was bent on sleep, though beamed and tined
He stood, a runnable stag.

So we tufted the covert till afternoon
With Tinkerman's Pup and Bell-of-the-North;
And hunters were sulky and hounds out of tune
Before we tufted the right stag forth,
Before we tufted him forth,
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The royal and runnable stag.

It was Bell-of-the-North and Tinkerman's Pup
That stuck to the scent till the copse was drawn.
"Tally ho! tally ho!" and the hunt was up,
The tufters whipped and the pack laid on,
The resolute pack laid on,
And the stag of warrant away at last,
The runnable stag, the same, the same,
His hoofs on fire, his horns like flame,
A stag, a runnable stag.

"Let your gelding be — if you check or chide
He stumbles at once and you're out of the hunt;
For three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
On hunters accustomed to bear the brunt,
Accustomed to bear the brunt,
Are after the runnable stag, the stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The right, the runnable stag."

By perilous paths in coomb and dell,
The heather, the rocks, and the river-bed,
The pace grew hot, for the scent lay well,
And a runnable stag goes right ahead.
The quarry went right ahead —
Ahead, ahead, and fast and far;
His antlered crest, his cloven hoof,
Brow, bay and tray and three aloof,
The stag, the runnable stag.

For a matter of twenty miles and more,
By the densest hedge and the highest wall,
Through herds of bullocks he baffled the lore
Of harborer, huntsman, hounds and all,
Of harborer, hounds and all —
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
He ran, and he never was caught alive,
This stag, this runnable stag.

When he turned at bay in the leafy gloom,
In the emerald gloom where the brook ran deep
He heard in the distance the rollers boom,
And he saw in a vision of peaceful sleep
In a wonderful vision of sleep,

---

39, 40. **Dulcimers, Psalteries,** stringed musical instruments.

*A Runnable Stag.* A stag, the male of the red deer, is runnable when of age and size sufficient for the chase, having at least two tines at the top of the horn.

1. **broom,** a stiff shrub with yellow flowers and stiff green branches. 3. **harbored,** started from cover. **coomb,** a narrow valley between rocky hills. 4. **feathered,** set the hounds on the trail. 6. **of warrant,** of a sufficient age to be hunted. 7. **kingly crop,** noble set of horns. 8. **Brow . . . top.** The brow is the first branch from the central beam; the bay and tray horns, the second and third; the three tines above would give this stag a total of six branches on each antler. 12. **brocket,** a stag in its second year with unbranched antlers. 17. **beamed and tined,** fully antlered. 19. **tufted,** beat—in an effort to start the stag.

29. **copse was drawn,** thicket was searched.

A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
A runnable stag in a jeweled bed,
Under the sheltering ocean dead,
A stag, a runnable stag.

So a fateful hope lit up his eye,
And he opened his nostrils wide again,
And he tossed his branching antlers high
As he headed the hunt down the Charlock glen,
As he raced down the echoing glen —
For five miles more, the stag, the stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
Not to be caught now, dead or alive,
The stag, the runnable stag.

Three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
Three hundred horses as gallant and free,
Beheld him escape on the evening tide,
Far out till he sank in the Severn Sea,
Till he sank in the depths of the sea —
The stag, the buoyant stag, the stag
That slept at last in a jeweled bed
Under the sheltering ocean spread,
The stag, the runnable stag.
(1906)

## SONG

Closes and courts and lanes,
Devious, clustered thick,
The thoroughfare, mains and drains,
People and mortar and brick,
Wood, metal, machinery, brains,
Pen and composing stick:
Fleet Street, but exquisite flame
In the nebula once ere day and night
Began their travail, or earth became,
And all was passionate light.

Networks of wire overland,
Conduits under the sea,
Aerial message from strand to strand
By lightning that travels free,
Hither in haste to hand
Tidings of destiny
These tingling nerves of the world's affairs
Deliver remorseless, rendering still
The fall of empires, the price of shares,
The record of good and ill.

Tidal the traffic goes
Citywards out of the town;
Townwards the evening ebb o'erflows
This highway of old renown,
When the fog-woven curtains close,
And the urban night comes down,
Where souls are spilt and intellects spent
O'er news vociferant near and far,
From Hesperus hard to the Orient,
From dawn to the evening star.

This is the royal refrain
That burdens the boom and the thud
Of omnibus, mobus, wain,
And the hoofs on the beaten mud,
From the Griffin at Chancery Lane
To the portal of old King Lud —
Fleet Street, diligent night and day,
Of news the mart and the burnished hearth,
Seven hundred paces of narrow way,
A notable bit of the earth.
(1909)

## FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859-1907)

### THE POPPY

TO MONICA

Summer set lip to earth's bosom bare,
And left the flushed print in a poppy there;
Like a yawn of fire from the grass it came,
And the fanning wind puffed it to flapping flame.

With burnt mouth, red like a lion's, it drank
The blood of the sun as he slaughtered sank,
And dipped its cup in the purpurate shine
When the eastern conduits ran with wine;

Till it grew lethargied with fierce bliss,
And hot as a swinkéd gypsy is,
And drowsed in sleepy savageries,
With mouth wide a-pout for a sultry kiss.

A child and man paced side by side,
Treading the skirts of eventide;
But between the clasp of his hand and hers
Lay, felt not, twenty withered years.

She turned, with the rout of her dusk South hair,
And saw the sleeping gypsy there;
And snatched and snapped it in swift child's whim,
With — "Keep it, long as you live!" — to him.

---

85. **Severn Sea,** the Bristol Channel, at the mouth of the Severn River.

*Song.* 1. **Closes,** enclosed plots of ground. 7. **Fleet Street,** a short but very busy street in the heart of London.

29. **Hesperus . . . Orient,** far west to far east. 33. **mobus,** motorbus. **wain,** wagon. 35. **Griffin . . . Lane,** an old tavern at the point where Fleet Street, intersected by Chancery Lane, becomes the Strand. 36. **portal . . . Lud,** Ludgate, at the eastern extremity of Fleet Street. King Lud was a mythical king of Britain, the traditional founder of London.

*The Poppy.* Monica is the daughter of Wilfred and Alice Meynell, Thompson's benefactors.

7. **purpurate,** purple. 10. **swinkéd,** wearied with toil.

And his smile, as nymphs from their laving meres,
Trembled up from a bath of tears;
And joy, like a mew sea-rocked apart,
Tossed on the wave of his troubled heart.

For *he* saw what she did not see,
That — as kindled by its own fervency
The verge shriveled inward smolderingly;

And suddenly 'twixt his hand and hers
He knew the twenty withered years
No flower, but twenty shriveled years.

"Was never such thing until this hour,"
Low to his heart he said; "the flower
Of sleep brings wakening to me,
And of oblivion, memory.

"Was never this thing to me," he said,
"Though with bruisèd poppies my feet are red!"
And again to his own heart very low:
"O child! I love, for I love and know;

"But you, who love nor know at all
The diverse chambers in Love's guest-hall,
Where some rise early, few sit long:
In how differing accents hear the throng
His great Pentecostal tongue;

"Who know not love from amity,
Nor my reported self from me;
A fair fit gift is this, meseems,
You give — this withering flower of dreams.

"O frankly fickle, and fickly true,
Do you know what the days will do to you?
To your Love and you what the days will do,
O frankly fickle, and fickly true?

"You have loved me, Fair, three lives — or days:
'Twill pass with the passing of my face.
But where *I* go, your face goes too,
To watch lest I play false to you.

"I am but, my sweet, your foster-lover,
Knowing well when certain years are over
You vanish from me to another;
Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother.

"So, frankly fickle, and fickly true!
For my brief life-while I take from you
This token, fair and fit, meseems,
For me — this withering flower of dreams."

The sleep-flower sways in the wheat its head,
Heavy with dreams, as that with bread:
The goodly grain and the sun-flushed sleeper
The reaper reaps, and Time the reaper.

I hang 'mid men my needless head,
And my fruit is dreams, as theirs is bread:
The goodly men and the sun-hazed sleeper
Time shall reap; but after the reaping
The world shall glean of me, me the sleeper!

Love, love! your flower of withered dream
In leavéd rhyme lies safe, I deem,
Sheltered and shut in a nook of rhyme,
From the reaper man, and his reaper Time.

Love! I fall into the claws of Time:
But lasts within a leavéd rime
All that the world of me esteems —
My withered dreams, my withered dreams.

(1893)

## THE MAKING OF VIOLA

### 1

*The Father of Heaven*

Spin, daughter Mary, spin,
Twirl your wheel with silver din;
Spin, daughter Mary, spin,
Spin a tress for Viola.

*Angels*

Spin, Queen Mary, a
Brown tress for Viola!

### 2

*The Father of Heaven*

Weave, hands angelical,
Weave a woof of flesh to pall —
Weave, hands angelical —
Flesh to pall our Viola.

*Angels*

Weave, singing brothers, a
Velvet flesh for Viola!

### 3

*The Father of Heaven*

Scoop, young Jesus, for her eyes,
Wood-browned pools of Paradise —
Young Jesus, for the eyes,
For the eyes of Viola.

*Angels*

Tint, Prince Jesus, a
Duskèd eye for Viola!

---

43. **Pentecostal**, referring to the gift of speaking in many languages bestowed upon the apostles as they were celebrating the Jewish feast of the Pentecost (*Acts*, 2:4).

*The Making of Viola.* 8. **pall**, cover.

4

*The Father of Heaven*

Cast a star therein to drown,
Like a torch in cavern brown,
Sink a burning star to drown
Whelmed in eyes of Viola.

*Angels*

Lave, Prince Jesus, a
Star in eyes of Viola!

*The Father of Heaven*

Breathe, Lord Paraclete,
To a bubbled crystal meet—
Breathe, Lord Paraclete—
Crystal soul for Viola.

*Angels*

Breathe, Regal Spirit, a
Flashing soul for Viola!

6

*The Father of Heaven*

Child-angels, from your wings
Fall the roseal hoverings,
Child-angels, from your wings
On the cheeks of Viola.

*Angels*

Linger, rosy reflex, a
Quenchless stain, on Viola!

7

*All things being accomplished, saith the Father of Heaven:*

Bear her down, and bearing, sing,
Bear her down on spyless wing,
Bear her down, and bearing, sing,
With a sound of Viola.

*Angels*

Music as her name is, a
Sweet sound of Viola!

8

Wheeling angels, past espial,
Danced her down with sound of viol;
Wheeling angels, past espial,
Descanting on "Viola."

*Angels*

Sing, in our footing, a
Lovely lilt of "Viola!"

9

Baby smiled, mother wailed,
Earthward while the sweetling sailed;
Mother smiled, baby wailed,
When to earth came Viola.

*And her elders shall say:*

So soon have we taught you a
Way to weep, poor Viola!

10

Smile, sweet baby, smile,
For you will have weeping-while;
Native in your heaven is smile,—
But your weeping, Viola?

Whence your smiles, we know, but ah!
Whence your weeping, Viola?—
Our first gift to you is a
Gift of tears, my Viola!

(1893)

## LITTLE JESUS

*Ex ore infantium Deus et lactentium perfecisti laudem*

Little Jesus, wast Thou shy
Once, and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of heaven, and just like me?
Didst Thou sometimes think of *there*,
And ask where all the angels were?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were;
And at waking 'twould distress me—
Not an angel there to dress me!

Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst Thou play in heaven with all
The angels, that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles? Did the things
Play *Can you see me?* through their wings?

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands, this way?
And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long?
And dost Thou like it best, that we
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?
I used to think, before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.
And did Thy Mother at the night

---

25. Paraclete, [illegible] 46. Descanting, singing [illegible]

"Little Jesus." Ex ore . . . laudem: the Vulgate version of *Psalms*, 8:2; the Authorized Version has: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength."

Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed, and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small;
And Thou know'st I cannot pray
To thee in my father's way —
When Thou wast so little, say,
Couldst Thou talk Thy Father's way?

So, a little Child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk.
To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair),
And say: "O Father, I, Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one."

And He will smile, that children's tongue
Has not changed since Thou wast young!
(1893)

## THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasméd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat — and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet —
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities
(For, though I knew His love Who followed,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside);
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to.
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangéd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to dawn, Be sudden; to eve, Be soon;
With thy young skyey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover!
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They clanged his chariot 'thwart a heaven
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet —
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat —
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies;
*They* at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But, just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's — share
With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,

---

*The Hound of Heaven.* "As the hound follows the hare, never ceasing in its running, ever drawing nearer in the chase . . . so does God follow the fleeing soul by his Divine grace" (O'Conor, *A Study of Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven,"* 1912, page 7).
24. **wist**, knew.

25. **margent**, edge, boundary. 28-29. **Fretted . . . moon**, troubled the doors of the moon until they vibrated with sweet sounds. 41. **savannahs**, open, level regions.

Quaffing, as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."
So it was done;
*I* in their delicate fellowship was one —
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
*I* knew all the swift importings
On the willful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spuméd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with — made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine —
With them joyed and was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,
When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak —
*Their* sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness;
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase,
With unperturbéd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noiséd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet —
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenseless utterly.
I slept, me thinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years —
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossomy twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must —
Designer infinite! —
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity;
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpséd turrets slowly wash again.
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound
With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!

---

72. **Lucent-weeping,** dripping with luminous drops.

118-119. **shook . . . me,** as Samson shook the pillars of the temple at Gaza and pulled down the roof on his head; see *Judges,* 16:29-30. 131. **amaranthine,** immortal, like the amaranth, which grows in the fields of Heaven. 135. **limn,** draw—as with charcoal. 150. **purpureal,** purple, as of royalty. **cypress-crowned,** as a symbol of sorrow and death. 156. **bruit,** noise, clamor. 159. **shard,** fragment.

Strange, piteous, futile thing,
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught"
(He said),
"And human love needs human meriting,
How hast thou merited —
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home;
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall;
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."
(*1891;* 1893)

## TO THE DEAD CARDINAL OF WESTMINSTER

I will not perturbate
Thy Paradisal state
With praise
Of thy dead days;

To the new-heavened say,
"Spirit, thou wert fine clay" —
This do,
Thy praise who knew.

Therefore my spirit clings
Heaven's porter by the wings,
And holds
Its gated golds

Apart, with thee to press
A private business —
Whence,
Deign me audience.

Anchorite, who didst dwell
With all the world for cell,
My soul
Round me doth roll

A sequestration bare.
Too far alike we were,
Too far
Dissimilar.

For its burning fruitage I
Do climb the tree o' the sky;
Do prize
Some human eyes.

*You* smelt the heaven-blossoms,
And all the sweet embosoms
The dear
Uranian year.

Those Eyes my weak gaze shuns,
Which to the suns are Suns,
Did
Not affray your lid.

The carpet was let down
(With golden moltings strown)
For you
Of the angels' blue.

But I, ex-Paradised,
The shoulder of your Christ
Find high
To lean thereby.

So flaps my helpless sail,
Bellying with neither gale,
Of Heaven
Nor Orcus even.

Life is coquetry
Of Death, which wearies me,
Too sure
Of the amour;

A tiring-room where I
Death's divers garments try,
Till fit
Some fashion sit.

It seemeth me too much
I do rehearse for such
A mean
And single scene.

The sandy glass hence bear —
Antique remembrancer;
My veins
Do spare its pains.

With secret sympathy
My thoughts repeat in me

---

*To the Dead Cardinal of Westminster.* The Cardinal was Henry Edward Manning (1808-92), a great preacher and social reformer.

17. **Anchorite,** hermit.

21. **sequestration,** medium of separation—i.e., it separated me from the world. 32. **Uranian year,** a year in heaven (from Urania, the muse of astronomy), equal to 365,000 earthly years (*2 Peter*, 3:8). 48. **Orcus,** the underworld.

Infirm
The turn o' the worm

Beneath my appointed sod;
The grave is in my blood;
I shake
To winds that take

Its grasses by the top;
The rains thereon that drop
Perturb
With drip acerb

My subtly answering soul;
The feet across its knoll
Do jar
Me from afar.

As sap foretastes the spring;
As Earth ere blossoming
Thrills
With far daffodils,

And feels her breast turn sweet
With the unconceivéd wheat;
So doth
My flesh foreloathe

The abhorréd spring of Dis,
With seething presciences
Affirm
The preparate worm.

I have no thought that I,
When at the last I die,
Shall reach
To gain your speech.

But you, should that be so,
May very well, I know,
May well
To me in hell

With recognizing eyes
Look from your Paradise —
"God bless
Thy hopelessness!"

Call, holy soul, O call
The hosts angelical,
And say —
"See, far away

"Lies one I saw on earth;
One stricken from his birth
With curse
Of destinate verse.

"What place doth He ye serve
For such sad spirit reserve —
Given,
In dark lieu of Heaven,

"The impitiable Dæmon,
Beauty, to adore and dream on,
To be
Perpetually

"Hers, but she never his?
He reapeth miseries;
Foreknows
His wages woes;

"He lives detachéd days;
He serveth not for praise;
For gold
He is not sold;

"Deaf is he to world's tongue;
He scorneth for his song
The loud
Shouts of the crowd;

"He asketh not world's eyes;
Not to world's ears he cries;
Saith — 'These
Shut, if you please';

"He measureth world's pleasure,
World's ease, as Saints might measure;
For hire
Just love entire

"He asks, not grudging pain;
And knows his asking vain,
And cries —
'Love! Love!' and dies,

"In guerdon of long duty,
Unowned by Love or Beauty;
And goes —
Tell, tell, who knows!

"Aliens from Heaven's worth,
Fine beasts who nose i' the earth,
Do there
Reward prepare.

"But are *his* great desires
Food but for nether fires?
Ah me,
A mystery!

"Can it be his alone,
To find, when all is known,
That what
He solely sought

---

76. **acerb,** harsh, bitter. 89. **spring of Dis,** the river Styx, in the realm of Dis, or Pluto (god of the lower world), over which the dead must pass. 92. **preparate,** ready—to devour the body. 111-12. **curse . . . verse,** predestined to sorrow, as was Œdipus when, before his birth, an oracle foretold in mystic verses his sorrowful end.

117. **impitiable Dæmon,** pitiless spirit.

"Is lost, and thereto lost
All that its seeking cost?
That he
Must finally,

"Through sacrificial tears
And anchoretic years,
Tryst
With the sensualist?"

So ask; and if they tell
The secret terrible,
Good friend,
I pray thee send

Some high gold embassage
To teach my unripe age.
Tell!
Lest my feet walk hell. (1893)

## FIELD-FLOWER

### A PHANTASY

God took a fit of Paradise-wind,
A slip of cœrule weather,
A thought as simple as Himself,
And raveled them together.
Unto His eyes He held it there,
To teach it gazing debonair
With memory of what, perdie,
A God's young innocences were.
His fingers pushed it through the sod —
It came up redolent of God,
Garrulous of the eyes of God
To all the breezes near it;
Musical of the mouth of God
To all had ears to hear it;
Mystical with the mirth of God,
That glow-like did ensphere it.
*And — "Babble! babble! babble!" said;*
*"I'll tell the whole world one day!"*
*There was no blossom half so glad,*
*Since sun of Christ's first Sunday.*

A poet took a flaw of pain,
A hap of skyey pleasure,
A thought had in his cradle lain,
And mingled them in measure.
That chrism he laid upon his eyes,
And lips, and heart, for euphrasies,
That he might see, feel, sing, perdie,
The simple things that are the wise.
Beside the flower he held his ways,
And leaned him to it gaze for gaze —
He took its meaning, gaze for gaze,
As baby looks on baby;
Its meaning passed into his gaze,
Native as meaning may be;
He rose with all his shining gaze
As children's eyes at play be.
*And — "Babble! babble! babble!" said;*
*"I'll tell the whole world one day!"*
*There was no poet half so glad,*
*Since man grew God that Sunday.*
(1897)

## ENVOY

Go, songs, for ended is our brief, sweet play;
Go, children of swift joy and tardy sorrow;
And some are sung, and that was yesterday,
And some unsung, and that may be to-morrow.

Go forth; and if it be o'er stony way,
Old joy can lend what newer grief must borrow;
And it was sweet, and that was yesterday,
And sweet is sweet, though purchasèd with sorrow.

Go, songs, and come not back from your far way;
And if men ask you why ye smile and sorrow,
Tell them ye grieve, for your hearts know Today,
Tell them ye smile, for your eyes know Tomorrow. (1897)

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

### "IN NO STRANGE LAND"

O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air —
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumor of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars! —

---

*Field-Flower*. 1. **fit**, strain, as of music. 2. **cœrule**, heavenly (deep-blue). 7. **perdie**, indeed (originally an Old French oath, *par Dieu*, by God). 22. **hap**, a chance bit. 25. **chrism**, sacred oil, used in the administration of Roman Catholic sacraments. 26. **euphrasies**, magic restoratives, as of the herb euphrasy (eye-bright), fabled to make old eyes young.

*Envoy*. This poem was printed at the end of a volume of poems entitled *New Poems* (1897).

1. **Go, songs**, a common literary convention, used by Chaucer, Spenser, Southey, and others.

*The Kingdom of God*. This poem was found among Thompson's papers at his death. **"In . . . land."** See *Exodus*, 2:22.—Zipporah bore Moses a son, "and he called his name Gershom; for he said, 'I have been a stranger in a strange land.'"

The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places —
Turn but a stone and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangéd faces,
That miss the many-splendored thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry — and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,
Cry — clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo, Christ walking on the water,
Not of Genesareth, but Thames! (1913)

## ROBERT SEYMOUR BRIDGES*
## (1844-1930)

### ELEGY

The wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves;
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves;

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten,
Miry and matted in the soaking wet —
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade —
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

'Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her,
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls;
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls.

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own,
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare; the branches
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head,
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun staunches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted;
And birds that love the South have taken wing.
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring. (1873)

### I WILL NOT LET THEE GO

I will not let thee go.
Ends all our month-long love in this?
Can it be summed up so,
Quit in a single kiss?
I will not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
If thy words' breath could scare thy deeds,
As the soft south can blow
And toss the feathered seeds,
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
Had not the great sun seen, I might;
Or were he reckoned slow
To bring the false to light,
Then might I let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
The stars that crowd the summer skies
Have watched us so below
With all their million eyes,
I dare not let thee go.

I will not let thee go.
Have we not chid the changeful moon,
Now rising late, and now
Because she set too soon,
And shall I let thee go?

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament?
I cannot let thee go.

---

19. **Jacob's ladder,** that on which Jacob saw angels going up and down between heaven and earth (*Genesis*, 28:12). 20. **Charing Cross,** a locality near Trafalgar Square, in the heart of London. 24. **Genesareth,** the Sea of Gallilee; the incident of Christ's walking on the sea is recorded in *Matthew*, 14:25-33.

*Only the early work of Bridges is here represented.

*I Will Not Let Thee Go.* 28. **blow,** bloom.

I will not let thee go.
I hold thee by too many bands;
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
I have thee by the hands,
And will not let thee go.

(1873)

## A POPPY GROWS UPON THE SHORE

A poppy grows upon the shore,
Bursts her twin cup in summer late;
Her leaves are glaucous-green and hoar,
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought,
In wonder if they care that she
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,
That dances with the noble corn;
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

(1873)

## TRIOLET

When first we met we did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master;
Of more than common friendliness
When first we met we did not guess.
Who could foretell this sore distress
This irretrievable disaster
When first we met? — We did not guess
That Love would prove so hard a master.

(1873)

## TRIOLET

All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.
If naught seem better, nothing's worse;
All women born are so perverse.
From Adam's wife, that proved a curse
Though God had made her for a blessing,
All women born are so perverse
No man need boast their love possessing.

(1873)

## From *THE GROWTH OF LOVE*

### 4

The very names of things beloved are dear,
And sounds will gather beauty from their sense,
As many a face through love's long residence
Groweth to fair instead of plain and sear;
But when I say thy name it hath no peer,
And I suppose fortune determined thence
Her dower, that such beauty's excellence
Should have a perfect title for the ear.
Thus may I think the adopting Muses chose
Their sons by name, knowing none would be heard
Or writ so oft in all the world as those —
Dan Chaucer, mighty Shakespeare, then for third
The classic Milton, and to us arose
Shelley with liquid music in the word.

(1876)

### 8

For beauty being the best of all we know
Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims
Of nature, and on joys whose earthly names
Were never told can form and sense bestow;
And man has sped his instinct to outgo
The step of science; and against her shames
Imagination stakes out heavenly claims,
Building a tower above the head of woe.
Nor is there fairer work for beauty found
Than that she win in nature her release
From all the woes that in the world abound;
Nay with his sorrow may his love increase,
If from man's greater need beauty redound,
And claims his tears for homage of his peace.

(1876)

### 16

This world is unto God a work of art,
Of which the unaccomplished heavenly plan
Is hid in life within the creature's heart,
And for perfection looketh unto man.
Ah me! those thousand ages: with what slow
Pains and persistence were his idols made,
Destroyed and made, ere ever he could know
The mighty mother must be so obeyed.
For lack of knowledge and through little skill
His childish mimicry outwent his aim;
His effort shaped the genius of his will;
Till through distinction and revolt he came,
True to his simple terms of good and ill,
Seeking the face of Beauty without blame.

(1876)

### 20

The world still goeth about to show and hide,
Befooled of all opinion, fond of fame;
But he that can do well taketh no pride,
And see'th his error, undisturbed by shame:
So poor's the best that longest life can do,
The most so little, diligently done;
So mighty is the beauty that doth woo,
So vast the joy that love from love hath won.

---

*A Poppy Grows upon the Shore.* 3. **glaucous-green**, bluish green. 10. **corn**, wheat

*Triolet.* See note on *Rose-Leaves*, page 762.

*The Growth of Love.* This is a series of sixty-nine sonnets.

God's love to win is easy, for He loveth
Desire's fair attitude, nor strictly weighs
The broken thing, but all alike approveth
Which love hath aim'd at Him — that is heaven's praise;
And if we look for any praise on earth,
'Tis in man's love — all else is nothing worth.
(1876)

### 23

O weary pilgrims, chanting of your woe,
That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,
Hailing in each the citadel divine
The which ye thought to have entered long ago;
Until at length your feeble steps and slow
Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,
And your hearts overburdened doubt in fine
Whether it be Jerusalem or no:
Disheartened pilgrims, I am one of you;
For, having worshiped many a barren face
I scarce now greet the goal I journeyed to;
I stand a pagan in the holy place;
Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,
And question with the God that I embrace.
(1876)

### 35

All earthly beauty hath one cause and proof,
To lead the pilgrim soul to beauty above;
Yet lieth the greater bliss so far aloof,
That few there be are weaned from earthly love.
Joy's ladder it is, reaching from home to home,
The best of all the work that all was good;
Whereof 'twas writ the angels aye upclomb,
Down sped, and at the top the Lord God stood.
But I my time abuse, my eyes by day
Centered on thee, by night my heart on fire —
Letting my numbered moments run away —
Nor e'en 'twixt night and day to heaven aspire —
So true it is that what the eye seeth not
But slow is loved, and loved is soon forgot.
(1889)

### 62

I will be what God made me, nor protest
Against the bent of genius in my time,
That science of my friends robs all the best,
While I love beauty, and was born to rime.
Be they our mighty men, and let me dwell
In shadow among the mighty shades of old,
With love's forsaken palace for my cell;
Whence I look forth and all the world behold,
And say, These better days, in best things worse,
This bastardy of time's magnificence,
Will mend in fashion and throw off the curse,
To crown new love with higher excellence.
Cursed though I be to live my life alone,
My toil is for man's joy, his joy my own.
(1889)

## A PASSER-BY

Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
  Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
  Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?
  Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
  Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
  Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air.
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
  And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
  Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped, grandest
  Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
  I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
  Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.
  But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,

---

*Sonnet 35.* 7-8. **angels . . . stood,** a reference to Jacob's ladder, *Genesis,* 28:12-13.—"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it." "The argument is partly from Michael Angelo's *Madrigals,* 19" (Bridges's note).

From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

(1879)

## I HAVE LOVED FLOWERS THAT FADE

I have loved flowers that fade,
Within those magic tents
Rich hues have marriage made
With sweet unmemoried scents:
A honeymoon delight —
A joy of love at sight,
That ages in an hour —
My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
Before their charm is writ
Along a liquid sky
Trembling to welcome it.
Notes, that with pulse of fire
Proclaim the spirit's desire,
Then die, and are nowhere —
My song be like an air!

Die, song, die like a breath,
And wither as a bloom;
Fear not a flowery death,
Dread not an airy tomb!
Fly with delight, fly hence!
'Twas thine love's tender sense
To feast; now on thy bier
Beauty shall shed a tear.

(1879)

## THERE IS A HILL BESIDE THE SILVER THAMES

There is a hill beside the silver Thames,
Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine;
And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.
Straight trees in every place
Their thick tops interlace,
And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows;
His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade,
Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.
His winter floods lay bare
The stout roots in the air;
His summer streams are cool, when they have played
Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
Robbing the golden market of the bees;
And laden barges float
By banks of myosote,
And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys
Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool
Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;
Where spreading crowfoot mars
The drowning nenuphars,
Waving the tassels of her silken grass
Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;
Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows
On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold —
Yet should her roots but try
Within these deeps to lie,
Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold
Her waxen head so high.

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;
And dreams, or falls asleep,
While curious fishes peep
About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care
Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
May by the pathway of the forest fare:
As from a buried day
Across the mind will stray
Some perishing mute shadow — and unaware
He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
Whether he bathe at morning in the stream;
Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
The meadows, busy with a blurring steam;
Or watch, as fades the light,
The gibbous moon grow bright,

---

22. **myosote,** a plant of the forget-me-not family. 30. **nenuphars,** water-lilies. 62. **gibbous,** convex, as the moon is when three-fourths full.

Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
And glorify the night.

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames?
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow —
Lest ere I come the while
Strange feet your shades defile;
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
Within your guardian isle. (1879)

## LONDON SNOW

When men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,
Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down;
Silently sifting and veiling road, roof, and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.
All night it fell, and when full inches seven
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;
And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare.
The eye marveled — marveled at the dazzling whiteness;
The ear harkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.
Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling;
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;
Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
"O look at the trees!" they cried, "O look at the trees!"
With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder,
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder;
When now already the sun, in pale display
Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day.
For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
And trains of somber men, past tale of number,
Tread along brown paths, as toward their toil they go;
But even for them awhile no cares encumber
Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken,
The daily thoughts of labor and sorrow slumber
At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm they have broken. (1880)

## THE VOICE OF NATURE

I stand on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling
A silver field afar in the mournful sea,
The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing
At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea:
Whose smile severe and chaste
June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.
In lofty thought strive, O spirit, forever;
In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavor.

Ah! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean
Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides;
Wer't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion
Precipitate all o'errides, and turns, nor abides;
For you, sad birds and fair,
Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air —
Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,
O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

---

**29. Paul's high dome,** the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, London. **32. tale,** count.

But far away, I think, in the Thames valley,
The silent river glides by flowery banks;
And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley
Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks:
Where if a light air stray,
'Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.
Love and peace be thine, O spirit, forever;
Serve thy sweet desire; despise endeavor.

And if it were only for thee, entrancéd river,
That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,
Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver;
Wer't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them:
For you my bowers green,
My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between,
Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,
O well should I understand the voice of Nature. (1880)

## THE CLOUDS HAVE LEFT THE SKY

The clouds have left the sky,
The wind hath left the sea,
The half-moon up on high
Shrinketh her face of dree.

She lightens on the comb
Of leaden waves, that roar
And thrust their hurried foam
Up on the dusky shore.

Behind the western bars
The shrouded day retreats,
And unperceived the stars
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,
The small moon lightens more;
And as I turn me home,
My shadow walks before. (1890)

## THE SNOW LIES SPRINKLED ON THE BEACH

The snow lies sprinkled on the beach,
And whitens all the marshy lea;
The sad gulls wail adown the gale;
The day is dark and black the sea.
Shorn of their crests the blighted waves
With driven foam the offing fleck;
The ebb is low and barely laves
The red rust of the giant wreck.

On such a stony, breaking beach
My childhood chanced and chose to be;
'Twas here I played, and musing made
My friend the melancholy sea.
He from his dim enchanted caves
With shuddering roar and onrush wild
Fell down in sacrificial waves
At feet of his exulting child.

Unto a spirit too light for fear
His wrath was mirth, his wail was glee —
My heart is now too fixed to bow
Though all his tempests howl at me;
For to the gain life's summer saves,
My solemn joy's increasing store,
The tossing of his mournful waves
Makes sweetest music evermore.
(1890)

## I LOVE ALL BEAUTEOUS THINGS

I love all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honored for them.

I too will something make
And joy in the making,
Although tomorrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking.
(1890)

## NIGHTINGALES

Beautiful must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song.
Where are those starry woods? Oh, might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams;
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound,
No dying cadence nor long sign can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,

---

22. **may**, hawthorn.
*The Clouds Have Left the Sky.* 4. **dree**, sorrow, grief.

As night is withdrawn
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn. (1893)

## SO SWEET LOVE SEEMED

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
When first we kissed beside the thorn,
So strangely sweet, it was not strange
We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell — let truth be told —
That love will change in growing old;
Though day by day is naught to see,
So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
Quite to forget what once he was,
Nor even in fancy to recall
The pleasure that was all in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
So deep in summer floods is drowned,
I wonder, bathed in joy complete,
How love so young could be so sweet.
(1893)

## WINTER NIGHTFALL

The day begins to droop —
Its course is done;
But nothing tells the place
Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,
And up the lane
You may hear, but cannot see,
The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums
In the farm hard by;
Its lowering smoke is lost
In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,
And all night through
The dropping will not cease
In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house
Must keep his chair;
He knows he will never again
Breathe the spring air.

His heart is worn with work;
He is giddy and sick
If he rise to go as far
As the nearest rick.

He thinks of his morn of life,
His hale, strong years;
And braves as he may the night
Of darkness and tears.
(1899)

## MY DELIGHT AND THY DELIGHT

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night;

My desire and thy desire
Twining to a tongue of fire,
Leaping live, and laughing higher;
Through the everlasting strife
In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
Hath the secret of the sun.

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life, and sweet is breath;

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
'Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay
In the dawning of the day.
(1899)

## PATER FILIO

Sense with keenest edge unuséd,
Yet unsteeled by scathing fire;
Lovely feet as yet unbruiséd
On the ways of dark desire;
Sweetest hope that lookest smiling
O'er the wilderness defiling!

Why such beauty, to be blighted
By the swarm of foul destruction?
Why such innocence delighted,
When sin stalks to thy seduction?
All the litanies e'er chaunted
Shall not keep thy faith undaunted.

I have prayed the sainted Morning
To unclasp her hands to hold thee;
From resignful Eve's adorning
Stol'n a robe of peace to enfold thee;
With all charms of man's contriving
Armed thee for thy lonely striving.

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*Winter Nightfall.* 8. **wain,** wagon. 24. **rick,** stack of hay.

*Pater Filio.* The title means *Father to Son.*

Me too once unthinking Nature
— Whence Love's timeless mockery took me —
Fashioned so divine a creature,
Yea, and like a beast forsook me.
I forgave, but tell the measure
Of her crime in thee, my treasure.
(1899)

## MARY ELIZABETH COLERIDGE
(1861-1907)

### A MOMENT

The clouds had made a crimson crown
About the mountains high.
The stormy sun was going down
In a stormy sky.

Why did you let your eyes so rest on me,
And hold your breath between?
In all the ages this can never be
As if it had not been.
(1896)

### "HE KNOWETH NOT THAT THE DEAD ARE THINE"

The weapon that you fought with was a word,
And with that word you stabbed me to the heart.
Not once but twice you did it, for the sword
Made no blood start.

They have not tried you for your life. You go
Strong in such innocence as men will boast.
They have not buried me. They do not know
Life from its ghost. (1896)

### GIFTS

I tossed my friend a wreath of roses, wet
With early dew, the garland of the morn.
He lifted it — and on his brow he set
A crackling crown of thorn.

Against my foe I hurled a murderous dart.
He caught it in his hand — I heard him laugh —
I saw the thing that should have pierced his heart
Turn to a golden staff.
(1896)

### THE WITCH

I have walked a great while over the snow,
And I am not tall nor strong.
My clothes are wet, and my teeth are set,
And the way was hard and long.
I have wandered over the fruitful earth,
But I never came here before.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!

The cutting wind is a cruel foe;
I dare not stand in the blast.
My hands are stone, and my voice a groan,
And the worst of death is past.
I am but a little maiden still;
My little white feet are sore.
Oh, lift me over the threshold, and let me in at the door!

Her voice was the voice that women have,
Who plead for their heart's desire.
She came — she came — and the quivering flame
Sank and died in the fire.
It never was lit again on my hearth
Since I hurried across the floor,
To lift her over the threshold, and let her in at the door! (1896)

### A HUGUENOT

Oh, a gallant set were they,
As they charged on us that day,
A thousand riding like one!
Their trumpets crying,
And their white plumes flying,
And their sabers flashing in the sun.

Oh, a sorry lot were we,
As we stood beside the sea,
Each man for himself as he stood!
We were scattered and lonely —
A little force only
Of the good men fighting for the good.

But I never loved more
On sea or on shore
The ringing of my own true blade.
Like lightning it quivered,
And the hard helms shivered,
As I sang, "None maketh me afraid!" (1896)

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*"He Knoweth Not That the Dead Are Thine."* See *Proverbs*, 9:18. Of the simple-minded man who listens to the call of a foolish woman, the writer says: "He knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell."

*The Witch.* Cf. *The Land of Heart's Desire*, page 863.
7. **lift . . . threshold.** According to a folk-belief, no evil spirit is able to cross the threshold of a house unless lifted over by an inmate. See S. T. Coleridge's *Christabel*, lines 129 ff. 17-18. **quivering . . . fire.** The presence of an evil spirit is betrayed by the action of fire, according to folk-belief. Cf. *Christabel*, lines 156 ff.

*A Huguenot.* The French Protestants, or Huguenots, were severely persecuted from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 to the restitution of their civil rights in 1787. This poem concerns an episode in their heroic resistance to French dragoons, bent on their annihilation.

### L'OISEAU BLEU

The lake lay blue below the hill.
O'er it, as I looked, there flew
Across the waters, cold and still,
A bird whose wings were palest blue.

The sky above was blue at last,
The sky beneath me blue in blue.
A moment, ere the bird had passed,
It caught his image as he flew. (1897)

### JEALOUSY

"The myrtle bush grew shady
Down by the ford."—
"Is it even so?" said my lady.
"Even so!" said my lord.
"The leaves are set too thick together
For the point of a sword."

"The arras in your room hangs close,
No light between!
You wedded one of those
That see unseen."—
"Is it even so?" said the King's Majesty.
"Even so!" said the Queen. (1897)

### SHADOW

Child of my love! though thou be bright as day,
Though all the sons of joy laugh and adore thee,
Thou canst not throw thy shadow self away.
Where thou dost come, the earth is darker for thee.

When thou dost pass, a flower that saw the sun
Sees him no longer.
The hosts of darkness are, thou radiant one,
Through thee made stronger. (1897)

### UNWELCOME

We were young, we were merry, we were very very wise,
And the door stood open at our feast,
When there passed us a woman with the West in her eyes,
And a man with his back to the East.

Oh, still grew the hearts that were beating so fast,
The loudest voice was still.
The jest died away on our lips as they passed,
And the rays of July struck chill.

The cups of red wine turned pale on the board,
The white bread black as soot.
The hound forgot the hand of her lord,
She fell down at his foot.

Low let me lie, where the dead dog lies,
Ere I sit me down again at a feast,
When there passes a woman with the West in her eyes,
And a man with his back to the East. (1898)

### IN A VOLUME OF AUSTIN DOBSON

The faded perfume of forgotten years,
The scent of withered rose-leaves sweetly faint,
Old-world imaginations, fancies quaint,
And fun just dancing on the edge of tears;

A boy's delight, a little maiden's fears,
A heroine of the days of patch and paint,
The gentle visions of an old French saint,
The treachery that repels not but endears.
(1907)

## LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS
(1870- )

### IMPRESSION DE NUIT: LONDON

See what a mass of gems the city wears
Upon her broad live bosom! row on row
Rubies and emeralds and amethysts glow.
See! that huge circle, like a necklace, stares
With thousands of bold eyes to heaven, and dares
The golden stars to dim the lamps below,
And in the mirror of the mire I know
The moon has left her image unawares.
That's the great town at night: I see her breasts;
Pricked out with lamps they stand like huge black towers,
I think they move! I hear her panting breath.
And that's her head where the tiara rests.
And in her brain, through lanes as dark as death,
Men creep like thoughts . . . The lamps are like pale flowers. (*1894;* 1894)

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*L'Oiseau Bleu.* The title means *The Blue-Bird.*

*In a Volume of Austin Dobson.* See Dobson's poems, pages 759 ff.

*Impression de Nuit: London.* The title means *Impression of a London Night.* The poem was written on the top floor of a building near Hyde Park.

12. **tiara,** a coronet—here, a circle of lights.

## A SONG

Steal from the meadows, rob the tall green hills,
Ravish my orchard's blossoms, let me bind
A crown of orchard flowers and daffodils,
Because my love is fair and white and kind.

Today the thrush has trilled her daintiest phrases,
Flowers with their incense have made drunk the air,
God has bent down to gild the hearts of daisies,
Because my love is kind and white and fair.

Today the sun has kissed the rose-tree's daughter,
And sad Narcissus, Spring's pale acolyte,
Hangs down his head and smiles into the water,
Because my love is kind and fair and white.
*(1894)*

## PLAINTE ETERNELLE

The sun sinks down, the tremulous daylight dies.
(Down their long shafts the weary sunbeams glide.)
The white-winged ships drift with the falling tide;
Come back, my love, with pity in your eyes!

The tall white ships drift with the falling tide.
(Far, far away I hear the seamews' cries.)
Come back, my love, with pity in your eyes!
There is no room now in my heart for pride.

Come back, come back! with pity in your eyes,
(The night is dark, the sea is fierce and wide.)
There is no room now in my heart for pride,
Though I become the scorn of all the wise.

I have no place now in my heart for pride.
(The moon and stars have fallen from the skies.)
Though I become the scorn of all the wise,
Thrust, if you will, sharp arrows in my side.

Let me become the scorn of all the wise.
(Out of the East I see the morning ride.)
Thrust, if you will, sharp arrows in my side,
Play with my tears and feed upon my sighs.

Wound me with swords, put arrows in my side.
(On the white sea the haze of noon-day lies.)
Play with my tears and feed upon my sighs,
But come, my love, before my heart has died.

Drink my salt tears and feed upon my sighs.
(Westward the evening goes with one red stride.)
Come back, my love, before my heart has died,
Down sinks the sun, the tremulous daylight dies.

Come back! my love, before my heart has died.
(Out of the South I see the pale moon rise.)
Down sinks the sun, the tremulous daylight dies,
The white-winged ships drift with the falling tide.
(c. 1896)

## THE DEAD POET

I dreamed of him last night, I saw his face
All radiant and unshadowed of distress,
And as of old, in music measureless,
I heard his golden voice and marked him trace
Under the common thing the hidden grace,
And conjure wonder out of emptiness,
Till mean things put on beauty like a dress
And all the world was an enchanted place.
And then methought outside a fast locked gate
I mourned the loss of unrecorded words,
Forgotten tales and mysteries half said,
Wonders that might have been articulate,
And voiceless thoughts like murdered singing birds.
And so I woke and knew that he was dead.
*(1901)*

## THE GREEN RIVER

I know a green grass path that leaves the field,
And like a running river, winds along
Into a leafy wood where is no throng
Of birds at noon-day, and no soft throats yield
Their music to the moon. The place is sealed,
An unclaimed sovereignty of voiceless song,
And all the unravished silences belong
To some sweet singer lost or unrevealed.
So is my soul become a silent place.
Oh, may I wake from this uneasy night

---

*A Song.* 10. **Narcissus,** a beautiful youth who fell in love with his own reflection seen in the water and who pined away in desire for it; he was changed into the flower that bears his name. **acolyte,** one who carries the wine, the water, and the lights at the Mass.

*Plainte Eternelle.* The title means *Everlasting Lament.*

*The Dead Poet.* This poem was written about Oscar Wilde a year after his death. Cf. Keats's sonnet *When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be.*

To find a voice of music manifold.
Let it be shape of sorrow with wan face,
Or Love that swoons on sleep, or else delight
That is as wide-eyed as a marigold. (c. 1907)

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS*
(1865- )

### THE STOLEN CHILD ✓

Where dips the rocky highland
Of Sleuth Wood in the lake,
There lies a leafy island
Where flapping herons wake
The drowsy water rats;
There we've hid our faery vats,
Full of berries,
And of reddest stolen cherries.
*Come away, O human child!*
*To the waters and the wild*
*With a faery, hand in hand,*
*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wave of moonlight glosses
The dim gray sands with light,
Far off by furthest Rosses
We foot it all the night,
Weaving olden dances,
Mingling hands and mingling glances
Till the moon has taken flight;
To and fro we leap
And chase the frothy bubbles,
While the world is full of troubles
And is anxious in its sleep.
*Come away, O human child!*
*To the waters and the wild*
*With a faery, hand in hand,*
*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Where the wandering water gushes
From the hills above Glen-Car,
In pools among the rushes
That scarce could bathe a star,
We seek for slumbering trout
And whispering in their ears
Give them unquiet dreams;
Leaning softly out
From ferns that drop their tears
Over the young streams.
*Come away, O human child!*
*To the waters and the wild*
*With a faery, hand in hand,*
*For the world's more full of weeping than you can understand.*

Away with us he's going,
The solemn-eyed;
He'll hear no more the lowing
Of the calves on the warm hillside
Or the kettle on the hob
Sing peace into his breast,
Or see the brown mice bob
Round and round the oatmeal-chest.
*For he comes, the human child,*
*To the waters and the wild*
*With a faery, hand in hand,*
*From a world more full of weeping than he can understand.*

(1889)

### THE ROSE OF THE WORLD

Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?
For these red lips, with all their mournful pride,
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
And Usna's children died.

We and the laboring world are passing by;
Amid men's souls, that waver and give place,
Like the pale waters in their wintry race,
Under the passing stars, foam of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face.

Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode.
Before you were, or any hearts to beat,
Weary and kind, one lingered by His seat;
He made the world to be a grassy road
Before her wandering feet.

(1893)

### THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE ✓

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made,

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*The Stolen Child.* Cf. Ferguson's *The Fairy Thorn*, page 382, and Allingham's *The Fairies*, page 496.

2. **Sleuth . . . lake.** The lake of Glen-Car, surrounded by wooded hills, is in the county of Sligo, province of Connaught, northwestern Ireland. 15. **Rosses,** granite headlands on the Sligo coast; Yeats says in a note that the locality is thought to be a favorite haunt of fairies.

*The Rose of the World.* Before Yeats, the Rose had been used as a symbol of love, as in the medieval *Romance of the Rose;* of the Virgin Mary, called "the mystic rose"; and of Ireland, as in Mangan's *Dark Rosaleen*, page 12. Yeats feels that the beauty of a woman suggests all other beautiful things and concepts in the world, and is hence infinitely important.

4. **Troy . . . gleam.** Helen's beauty brought about the Trojan War and the burning of Troy; cf. Symons's *Modern Beauty*, line 8, page 876. 5. **Usna's children.** The three sons of Usna died for the love of Deirdre, as related in the old Irish epic tales of Cuchulain.

*The Lake Isle of Innisfree.* Innisfree is an island in Lough Gill, a lake in the county of Sligo, Ireland.

2. **wattles,** interwoven rods and twigs.

Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core. (1893)

## WHEN YOU ARE OLD

When you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.
(1893)

## CUCHULAIN'S FIGHT WITH THE SEA

A man came slowly from the setting sun,
To Emer, raddling raiment in her dun,
And said, "I am that swineherd whom you bid
Go dwell upon the cliffs and watch the tide;
But now I have no need to watch it more."

Then Emer cast the web upon the floor,
And raising arms all raddled with the dye,
Parted her lips with a loud sudden cry.

That swineherd stared upon her face and said,
"Not any god alive, nor mortal dead,
Has slain so mighty armies, so great kings,
Nor won the gold that now Cuchulain brings."

"Why do you tremble thus from feet to crown?"

He caught his breath and cast him weeping down
Upon the web-heaped floor, and thus his word:
"With him is one sweet-throated like a bird."

"You dare me to my face," and thereupon
She smote with raddled fist, and where her son
Herded the cattle came with stumbling feet,
And cried with angry voice, "It is not meet
To idle life away with flocks and herds."

"I have long waited, mother, for those words;
But wherefore now?"
"There is a man to die;
You have the heaviest arm under the sky."

"No, somewhere under daylight or the stars
My father stands amid his battle cars."

"But you have grown to be the taller man."

"Yet somewhere under starlight or the sun
My father stands amid his battle cars."

"But he is old and sad with many wars."

"I only ask what way my journey lies.
For He who made you bitter, made you wise."

"The Red Branch gather a great company
Between the game and the horses of the sea.
Go there, and camp upon the forest's rim;
But tell your name and lineage to him
Whose blade compels, and bid them send you one
Who has a like vow from their triple dun."

Among those feasting kings Cuchulain dwelt,
And his young dear one close beside him knelt;
Stared like the spring upon the ancient skies,
Upon the mournful wonder of his eyes,

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*Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea.* Cuchulain is the chief hero of the Ulster or Red Branch cycle of Irish epic lays, dating from the beginning of the Christian era, and preserved in manuscripts of a much later date or in folk tradition. The poem relates one of the later incidents of the hero's career: Emer, who long before the opening of the poem had borne a son to Cuchulain, is made angry by the news that Cuchulain has deserted her for a princess, to whom Yeats gives no name; she sends her son, now grown to manhood, to avenge her wrong; she instructs him to seek a battle with Cuchulain but to keep his identity a secret. As a result, the son is slain by the father. Cf. Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum,* page 459.

In the older versions of the story, such as those in Curtin's *Myths and Folk-Lore of Ireland* (which Yeats called his source) and Lady Gregory's *Cuchulain of Muirthemne,* Emer is not the name of the jealous queen whom Cuchulain has deserted, but that of his faithful wife.

2. **raddling,** coloring with red dye. **dun,** a hill-fort.

33. **Red Branch,** the men of Ulster. 34. **Between . . . sea,** between the forest and the ocean. 38. **like vow,** a vow not to disclose his name until compelled by force of arms. **triple dun,** group of three forts.

And pondered on the glory of his days;
And all around the harp-string told his praise,
And Concobar, the Red Branch king of kings,
With his own fingers touched the brazen strings.

At last Cuchulain spake, "Some man has made
His evening fire amid the leafy shade.
I have often heard him singing to and fro,
I have often heard the sweet sound of his bow;
Seek out what man he is."

One went and came.
"He bade me let all know he gives his name
At the sword point, and bade me bring him one
Who had a like vow from our triple dun."

"I only of the Red Branch hosted now,"
Cuchulain cried, "have made and keep that vow."

After short fighting in the leafy shade,
He spake to the young man, "Is there no maid
Who loves you, no white arms to wrap you round,
Or do you long for the dim sleepy ground,
That you have come and dared me to my face?"

"The dooms of men are in God's hidden place."

"Your head a while seemed like a woman's head
That I loved once."

Again the fighting sped,
But now the war rage in Cuchulain woke,
And through that new blade's guard the old blade broke,
And pierced him.

"Speak before your breath is done."
"Cuchulain I, mighty Cuchulain's son."

"I put you from your pain. I can no more."

While day its burden on to evening bore,
With head bowed on his knees Cuchulain stayed;
Then Concobar sent that sweet-throated maid,
And she, to win him, his gray hair caressed;
In vain her arms, in vain her soft white breast.
Then Concobar, the subtlest of all men,
Ranking his Druids round him ten by ten,
Spake thus, "Cuchulain will dwell there and brood,
For three days more in dreadful quietude,
And then arise, and raving slay us all.
Chaunt in his ear delusions magical,
That he may fight the horses of the sea."
The Druids took them to their mystery,
And chanted for three days.

Cuchulain stirred,
Stared on the horses of the sea, and heard
The cars of battle and his own name cried;
And fought with the invulnerable tide. (1893)

## THE LAND OF HEART'S DESIRE

O Rose, thou art sick.
—*William Blake.*

*PERSONS OF THE PLAY*

MAURTEEN BRUIN
BRIDGET BRUIN
SHAWN BRUIN
MARY BRUIN
FATHER HART
A FAERY CHILD

*The Scene is laid in the Barony of Kilmacowen, in the County of Sligo, and at a remote time.*

SCENE.—*A room with a hearth on the floor in the middle of a deep alcove to the Right. There are benches in the alcove and a table; and a crucifix on the wall. The alcove is full of a glow of light from the fire. There is an open door facing the audience to the Left, and to the left of this a bench. Through the door one can see the forest. It is night, but the moon or a late sunset glimmers through the trees and carries the eye far off into a vague, mysterious world.* MAURTEEN BRUIN, SHAWN BRUIN, *and* BRIDGET BRUIN *sit in the alcove at the table or about the fire. They are dressed in the costume of some remote time, and near them sits an old priest,* FATHER HART. *He may be dressed*

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45. **Concobar,** king of Ulster. 55. **hosted,** present in the army. 62. **dooms,** fates.

76. **Druids,** priests of the ancient Celts. 86. **fought . . . tide.** Other versions relate that Cuchulain fought in frenzy with the waves for three days and nights until he fell from hunger and exhaustion.

*The Land of Heart's Desire.* "The Land of Heart's Desire" is the Celtic Otherworld, sometimes called the Isle of Avalon or the Blessed Isles; it is a land of perpetual youth and happiness. Irish legends tell of men who have seen it on the horizon or who have dwelt there; Welsh legends relate that Arthur is waiting there his time for returning.

**O . . . sick,** from William Blake's *The Sick Rose* (*Songs of Experience,* 1794):

"O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy."

*as a friar. There is food and drink upon the table.* Mary Bruin *stands by the door reading a book. If she looks up she can see through the door into the wood.*

Bridget. Because I bid her clean the pots for supper
She took that old book down out of the thatch;
She has been doubled over it ever since.
We should be deafened by her groans and moans
Had she to work as some do, Father Hart;
Get up at dawn like me and mend and scour
Or ride abroad in the boisterous night like you,
The pyx and blessed bread under your arm.
Shawn. Mother, you are too cross.
Bridget. You've married her,
And fear to vex her and so take her part.
Maurteen [*to* Father Hart]. It is but right that youth should side with youth;
She quarrels with my wife a bit at times,
And is too deep just now in the old book!
But do not blame her greatly: she will grow
As quiet as a puff-ball in a tree
When but the moons of marriage dawn and die
For half a score of times.
Father Hart. Their hearts are wild,
As be the hearts of birds, till children come.
Bridget. She would not mind the kettle, milk the cow,
Or even lay the knives and spread the cloth.
Shawn. Mother, if only —
Maurteen. Shawn, this is half empty;
Go, bring up the best bottle that we have.
Father Hart. I *never* saw her read a book before;
What can it be?
Maurteen [*to* Shawn]. What are you waiting for?
You must not shake it when you draw the cork;
It's precious wine, so take your time about it.
[*To Priest*] [Shawn *goes*.]
There was a Spaniard wrecked at Ocris Head,
When I was young, and I have still some bottles.
He cannot bear to hear her blamed; the book
Has lain up in the thatch these fifty years;
My father told me my grandfather wrote it,
And killed a heifer for the binding of it —
But supper's spread, and we can talk and eat.
It was little good he got out of the book,
Because it filled his house with rambling fiddlers,
And rambling ballad-makers and the like.
The griddle-bread is there in front of you.
Colleen, what is the wonder in that book,
That you must leave the bread to cool? Had I
Or had my father read or written books
There were no stocking stuffed with yellow guineas
To come when I am dead to Shawn and you.
Father Hart. You should not fill your head with foolish dreams.
What are you reading?
Mary. How a Princess Edane,
A daughter of a King of Ireland, heard
A voice singing on a May Eve like this,
And followed half awake and half asleep,
Until she came into the Land of Faery,
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue.
And she is still there, busied with a dance
Deep in the dewy shadow of a wood,
Or where stars walk upon a mountain-top.
Maurteen. Persuade the colleen to put down the book;
My grandfather would mutter just such things,
And he was no judge of a dog or a horse,
And any idle boy could blarney him;
Just speak your mind.
Father Hart. Put it away, my colleen;
God spreads the heavens above us like great wings
And gives a little round of deeds and days,
And then come the wrecked angels and set snares,
And bait them with light hopes and heavy dreams,
Until the heart is puffed with pride and goes
Half shuddering and half joyous from God's peace;
For it was some wrecked angel, blind with tears,
Who flattered Edane's heart with merry words.
My colleen, I have seen some other girls
Restless and ill at ease, but years went by
And they grew like their neighbors and were glad
In minding children, working at the churn,
And gossiping of weddings and of wakes;
For life moves out of a red flare of dreams
Into a common light of common hours,
Until old age bring the red flare again.

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8. **pyx**, the vessel which contains the consecrated bread used in the Roman Catholic Mass. 27. **Spaniard**, Spanish ship. **Ocris Head**, a promontory that separates Sligo Bay from the ocean.

38. **Colleen**, girl. 44. **Princess Edane.** The story is found in Lady Wilde's *Ancient Legends of Ireland* (1886-88). Edain is the King of Munster's daughter; she is lured to the Land of Heart's Desire by Midar, king of the fairies. 46. **May Eve.** According to Irish folk-lore, the fairies are especially powerful on May Eve and frequently steal away newly married mortal women to be their own brides. 72. **wakes**, feasts which precede Irish funerals.

Maurteen. That's true — but she's too young to know it's true.
Bridget. She's old enough to know that it is wrong
To mope and idle.
Maurteen. I've little blame for her;
She's dull when my big son is in the fields,
And that and maybe this good woman's tongue
Have driven her to hide among her dreams
Like children from the dark under the bedclothes.
Bridget. She'd never do a turn if I were silent.
Maurteen. And maybe it is natural upon May Eve
To dream of the good people. But tell me, girl,
If you've the branch of blessed quicken wood
That women hang upon the post of the door
That they may send good luck into the house?
Remember they may steal new-married brides
After the fall of twilight on May Eve,
Or what old women mutter at the fire
Is but a pack of lies.
Father Hart. It may be truth.
We do not know the limit of those powers
God has permitted to the evil spirits
For some mysterious end. You have done right [*to* Mary];
It's well to keep old innocent customs up.

[Mary Bruin *has taken a bough of quicken wood from a seat and hung it on a nail in the door-post. A girl child strangely dressed, perhaps in faery green, comes out of the wood and takes it away.*

Mary. I had no sooner hung it on the nail
Before a child ran up out of the wind;
She has caught it in her hand and fondled it;
Her face is pale as water before dawn.
Father Hart. Whose child can this be?
Maurteen. No one's child at all.
She often dreams that some one has gone by,
When there was nothing but a puff of wind.
Mary. They have taken away the blessed quicken wood,
They will not bring good luck into the house;
Yet I am glad that I was courteous to them,
For are not they, likewise, children of God?
Father Hart. Colleen, they are the children of the fiend,
And they have power until the end of Time,
When God shall fight with them a great pitched battle
And hack them into pieces.
Mary. He will smile,
Father, perhaps, and open His great door.
Father Hart. Did but the lawless angels see that door
They would fall, slain by everlasting peace;
And when such angels knock upon our doors,
Who goes with them must drive through the same storm.

[*An arm comes around the door-post and knocks and beckons. It is clearly seen in the silvery light.* Mary Bruin *goes to door and stands in it for a moment.* Maurteen Bruin *is busy filling* Father Hart's *plate.* Bridget Bruin *stirs the fire.*

Mary [*coming to table*]. There's somebody out there that beckoned me
And raised her hand as though it held a cup,
And she was drinking from it, so it may be
That she is thirsty.

[*She takes milk from the table and carries it to the door.*

Father Hart. That will be the child
That you would have it was no child at all.
Bridget. And maybe, Father, what he said was true;
For there is not another night in the year
So wicked as tonight.
Maurteen. Nothing can harm us
While the good Father's underneath our roof.
Mary. A little queer old woman dressed in green.
Bridget. The good people beg for milk and fire
Upon May Eve — woe to the house that gives,
For they have power upon it for a year.
Maurteen. Hush, woman, hush!
Bridget. She's given milk away.
I knew she would bring evil on the house.
Maurteen. Who was it?
Mary. Both the tongue and face were strange.
Maurteen. Some strangers came last week to Clover Hill;
She must be one of them.
Bridget. I am afraid.
Father Hart. The Cross will keep all evil from the house
While it hangs there.

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85. **good people**, fairies—so called lest they take offense and do mortals injury. 86. **blessed . . . wood**, mountain ash, hung on the door-post to protect the household from the power of the fairies.

128. **woe . . . gives.** It was formerly said that Irish peasants never give away fire, water, milk, or salt on May Eve for fear of falling under a fairy spell.

MAURTEEN. Come, sit beside me, colleen,
And put away your dreams of discontent,
For I would have you light up my last days,
Like the good glow of the turf; and when I die
You'll be the wealthiest hereabout, for, colleen,
I have a stocking full of yellow guineas
Hidden away where nobody can find it.
BRIDGET. You are the fool of every pretty face,
And I must spare and pinch that my son's wife
May have all kinds of ribbons for her head.
MAURTEEN. Do not be cross; she is a right good girl!
The butter is by your elbow, Father Hart.
My colleen, have not Fate and Time and Change
Done well for me and for old Bridget there?
We have a hundred acres of good land,
And sit beside each other at the fire.
I have this reverend Father for my friend;
I look upon your face and my son's face —
We've put his plate by yours — and here he comes,
And brings with him the only thing we have lacked,
Abundance of good wine. [SHAWN *comes in.*] Stir up the fire,
And put new turf upon it till it blaze;
To watch the turf-smoke coiling from the fire,
And feel content and wisdom in your heart,
This is the best of life; when we are young
We long to tread a way none trod before,
But find the excellent old way through love,
And through the care of children, to the hour
For bidding Fate and Time and Change good-by.

[MARY *stands for a moment in the door, and then takes a sod of turf from the fire and goes out through the door.* SHAWN *follows her and meets her coming in.*

SHAWN. What is it draws you to the chill o' the wood?
There is a light among the stems of the trees
That makes one shiver.
MARY. A little queer old man
Made me a sign to show he wanted fire
To light his pipe.
BRIDGET. You've given milk and fire
Upon the unluckiest night of the year and brought,
For all you know, evil upon the house.
Before you married you were idle and fine
And went about with ribbons on your head;
And now — no, Father, I will speak my mind —
She is not a fitting wife for any man —
SHAWN. Be quiet, mother!
MAURTEEN. You are much too cross.
MARY. What do I care if I have given this house,
Where I must hear all day a bitter tongue,
Into the power of faeries!
BRIDGET. You know well
How calling the good people by that name,
Or talking of them over much at all,
May bring all kinds of evil on the house.
MARY. Come, faeries, take me out of this dull house!
Let me have all the freedom I have lost;
Work when I will and idle when I will!
Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,
For I would ride with you upon the wind,
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
And dance upon the mountains like a flame.
FATHER HART. You cannot know the meaning of your words.
MARY. Father, I am right weary of four tongues:
A tongue that is too crafty and too wise,
A tongue that is too godly and too grave,
A tongue that is more bitter than the tide,
And a kind tongue too full of drowsy love,
Of drowsy love and my captivity.

[SHAWN BRUIN *leads her to a seat at the left of the door.*

SHAWN. Do not blame me; I often lie awake
Thinking that all things trouble your bright head.
How beautiful it is — your broad pale forehead
Under a cloudy blossoming of hair!
Sit down beside me here — these are too old,
And have forgotten they were ever young.
MARY. Oh, you are the great door-post of this house,
And I the branch of blessed quicken wood,
And if I could I'd hang upon the post,
Till I had brought good luck into the house.

[*She would put her arms about him, but looks shyly at the priest and lets her arms fall.*

FATHER HART. My daughter, take his hand — by love alone
God binds us to Himself and to the hearth,
That shuts us from the waste beyond His peace,
From maddening freedom and bewildering light.
SHAWN. Would that the world were mine to give it you,
And not its quiet hearths alone, but even

All that bewilderment of light and freedom,
If you would have it.
MARY. I would take the world
And break it into pieces in my hands
To see you smile watching it crumble away.
SHAWN. Then I would mould a world of fire and dew,
With no one bitter, grave or over-wise,
And nothing marred or old to do you wrong,
And crowd the enraptured quiet of the sky
With candles burning to your lonely face.
MARY. Your looks are all the candles that I need.
SHAWN. Once a fly dancing in a beam of the sun,
Or the light wind blowing out of the dawn,
Could fill your heart with dreams none other knew,
But now the indissoluble sacrament
Has mixed your heart that was most proud and cold
With my warm heart forever; the sun and moon
Must fade and heaven be rolled up like a scroll;
But your white spirit still walks by my spirit.
[*A Voice singing in the wood.*
MAURTEEN. There's some one singing.
Why, it's but a child.
It sang, "The lonely of heart is withered away."
A strange song for a child, but she sings sweetly.
Listen, listen! [*Goes to door.*
MARY. Oh, cling close to me,
Because I have said wicked things tonight.
THE VOICE. The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away.
While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;
For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say,
"When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung
The lonely of heart is withered away!"
MAURTEEN. Being happy, I would have all others happy,
So I will bring her in out of the cold.
[*He brings in the faery child.*

THE CHILD. I tire of winds and waters and pale lights.
MAURTEEN. And that's no wonder, for when night has fallen
The wood's a cold and a bewildering place,
But you are welcome here.
THE CHILD. I am welcome here.
For when I tire of this warm little house,
But there is one here that must away, away.
MAURTEEN. O, listen to her dreamy and strange talk.
Are you not cold?
THE CHILD. I will crouch down beside you,
For I have run a long, long way this night.
BRIDGET. You have a comely shape.
MAURTEEN. Your hair is wet.
BRIDGET. I'll warm your chilly feet.
MAURTEEN. You have come indeed
A long, long way—for I have never seen
Your pretty face—and must be tired and hungry;
Here is some bread and wine.
THE CHILD. The wine is bitter.
Old mother, have you no sweet food for me?
BRIDGET. I have some honey.
[*She goes into the next room.*
MAURTEEN. You have coaxing ways,
The mother was quite cross before you came.

[BRIDGET *returns with the honey and fills a porringer with milk.*

BRIDGET. She is the child of gentle people; look
At her white hands and at her pretty dress.
I've brought you some new milk, but wait a while
And I will put it to the fire to warm,
For things well fitted for poor folk like us
Would never please a high-born child like you.
THE CHILD. From dawn, when you must blow the fire ablaze,
You work your fingers to the bone, old mother.
The young may lie in bed and dream and hope,
But you must work your fingers to the bone
Because your heart is old.
BRIDGET. The young are idle.
THE CHILD. Your memories have made you wise, old father;
The young must sigh through many a dream and hope,
But you are wise because your heart is old.

[BRIDGET *gives her more bread and honey.*

MAURTEEN. Oh, who would think to find so young a girl
Loving old age and wisdom?

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226. **indissoluble sacrament**, marriage. 228-29. **sun . . . scroll.** From the description of the last judgment in *Revelation* (6:12, 14)—"the sun became black . . . and the moon became as blood . . . And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together." 245. **Coolaney**, a lake some six miles southwest of Kilmacowen. 249. **He . . . child.** According to folk-lore, evil spirits were not able to cross a mortal threshold without being helped. See S. T. Coleridge's *Christabel;* also Mary Coleridge's *The Witch*, p. 858.

THE CHILD. No more, mother.
MAURTEEN. What a small bite! The milk is ready now. [*Hands it to her.*]
What a small sip!
THE CHILD. Put on my shoes, old mother.
For I would like to dance now I have eaten,
The reeds are dancing by Coolaney lake,
And I would like to dance until the reeds
And the white waves have danced themselves asleep.

[BRIDGET *puts on the shoes, and the* CHILD *is about to dance, but suddenly sees the crucifix and shrieks and covers her eyes.*

What is the ugly thing on the black cross?
FATHER HART. You cannot know how naughty your words are!
That is our Blessed Lord.
THE CHILD. Hide it away!
BRIDGET. I have begun to be afraid again.
THE CHILD. Hide it away!
MAURTEEN. That would be wickedness!
BRIDGET. That would be sacrilege!
THE CHILD. The tortured thing! Hide it away!
MAURTEEN. Her parents are to blame.
FATHER HART. That is the image of the Son of God.
THE CHILD [*caressing him*]. Hide it away, hide it away!
MAURTEEN. No, no.
FATHER HART. Because you are so young and like a bird,
That must take fright at every stir of the leaves,
I will go take it down.
THE CHILD. Hide it away!
And cover it out of sight and out of mind!

[FATHER HART *takes crucifix from wall and carries it towards inner room.*

FATHER HART. Since you have come into this barony,
I will instruct you in our blessed faith;
And being so keen-witted you'll soon learn.
[*To the others.*
We must be tender to all budding things,
Our Maker let no thought of Calvary
Trouble the morning stars in their first song.
[*Puts crucifix in inner room.*
THE CHILD. Here is level ground for dancing; I will dance. [*Sings.*]
The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away.
[*She dances.*
MARY [*to* SHAWN]. Just now when she came near I thought I heard
Other small steps beating upon the floor,
And a faint music blowing in the wind,
Invisible pipes giving her feet the tune.
SHAWN. I heard no steps but hers.
MARY. I hear them now,
The unholy powers are dancing in the house.
MAURTEEN. Come over here, and if you promise me
Not to talk wickedly of holy things
I will give you something.
THE CHILD. Bring it me, old father.
MAURTEEN. Here are some ribbons that I bought in the town
For my son's wife — but she will let me give them
To tie up that wild hair the winds have tumbled.
THE CHILD. Come, tell me, do you love me?
MAURTEEN. Yes, I love you.
THE CHILD. Ah, but you love this fireside.
Do you love me?
FATHER HART. When the Almighty puts so great a share
Of His own ageless youth into a creature,
To look is but to love.
THE CHILD. But you love Him?
BRIDGET. She is blaspheming.
THE CHILD. And do you love me too?
MARY. I do not know.
THE CHILD. You love that young man there,
Yet I could make you ride upon the winds,
Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
And dance upon the mountains like a flame.
MARY. Queen of Angels and kind saints, defend us!
Some dreadful thing will happen. A while ago
She took away the blessed quicken wood.
FATHER HART. You fear because of her unmeasured prattle;
She knows no better. Child, how old are you?
THE CHILD. When winter sleep is abroad my hair grows thin,
My feet unsteady. When the leaves awaken
My mother carries me in her golden arms;
I'll soon put on my womanhood and marry
The spirits of wood and water, but who can tell
When I was born for the first time? I think
I am much older than the eagle cock
That blinks and blinks on Ballygawley Hill,
And he is the oldest thing under the moon.
FATHER HART. Oh, she is of the faery people.
THE CHILD. One called,

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307. **morning stars . . . song.** From *Job*, 38:7.—"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"; the creation of the world is described.

347. **Ballygawley Hill,** a mountain in Tyrone, Ulster.

I sent my messengers for milk and fire,
She called again and after that I came.

[*All except* SHAWN *and* MARY BRUIN *gather behind the priest for protection.*

SHAWN [*rising*]. Though you have made all these obedient,
You have not charmed my sight and won from me
A wish or gift to make you powerful:
I'll turn you from the house.
FATHER HART. No, I will face her.
THE CHILD. Because you took away the crucifix
I am so mighty that there's none can pass,
Unless I will it, where my feet have danced
Or where I've whirled my finger-tops.

[SHAWN *tries to approach her and cannot.*

MAURTEEN. Look, look!
There something stops him — look how he moves his hands
As though he rubbed them on a wall of glass!
FATHER HART. I will confront this mighty spirit alone;
Be not afraid, the Father is with us,
The Holy Martyrs and the Innocents,
The adoring Magi in their coats of mail,
And He who died and rose on the third day,
And all the nine angelic hierarchies.

[THE CHILD *kneels upon the settle beside* MARY *and puts her arm about her.*

Cry, daughter, to the Angels and the Saints.
THE CHILD. You shall go with me, newly-married bride,
And gaze upon a merrier multitude.
White-armed Nuala, Aengus of the Birds,
Feacra of the hurtling foam, and him
Who is the ruler of the Western Host,
Finvarra, and their Land of Heart's Desire,
Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,
But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song.
I kiss you and the world begins to fade.
SHAWN. Awake out of that trance — and cover up
Your eyes and ears.
FATHER HART. She must both look and listen,
For only the soul's choice can save her now.
Come over to me, daughter; stand beside me;
Think of this house and of your duties in it.
THE CHILD. Stay and come with me, newly-married bride,
For if you hear him you grow like the rest;
Bear children, cook, and bend above the churn,
And wrangle over butter, fowl, and eggs,
Until at last, grown old and bitter of tongue,
You're crouching there and shivering at the grave.
FATHER HART. Daughter, I point you out the way to Heaven.
THE CHILD. But I can lead you, newly-married bride,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue,
And where kind tongues bring no captivity;
For we are but obedient to the thoughts
That drift into the mind at a wink of the eye.
FATHER HART. By the dear Name of the One crucified,
I bid you, Mary Bruin, come to me.
THE CHILD. I keep you in the name of your own heart.
FATHER HART. It is because I put away the crucifix
That I am nothing, and my power is nothing.
I'll bring it here again.
MAURTEEN [*clinging to him*]. No.
BRIDGET. Do not leave us.
FATHER HART. Oh, let me go before it is too late;
It is my sin alone that brought it all.
[*Singing outside.*
THE CHILD. I hear them sing, "Come, newly-married bride,
Come to the woods and waters and pale lights."
MARY. I will go with you.
FATHER HART. She is lost, alas!
THE CHILD [*standing by the door*]. But clinging mortal hope must fall from you,
For we who ride the winds, run on the waves,
And dance upon the mountains are more light
Than dewdrops on the banner of the dawn.
MARY. Oh, take me with you.
SHAWN. Beloved, I will keep you.
I've more than words, I have these arms to hold you,
Nor all the faery host, do what they please,
Shall ever make me loosen you from these arms.
MARY. Dear face! Dear voice!
THE CHILD. Come, newly-married bride.
MARY. I always loved her world — and yet — and yet ——

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357. **took . . . crucifix.** Fairies partake of the nature of demons in that their great power fails in the presence of Christian symbols. 365. **Innocents,** the young children put to death by Herod (*Matthew,* 2:16). 368. **nine . . . hierarchies.** Heavenly beings are traditionally divided into nine groups, arranged in order of importance: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, Angels. 372. **Nuala,** queen of the Connaught fairies. **Aengus,** the Celtic god of love; his kisses changed to birds and flew always about his head. 373. **Feacra,** "an ancient hero, now . . . a sea-fairy" (Yeats's note). 375. **Finvarra,** king of the Connaught fairies.

The Child. White bird, white bird, come with me, little bird.
Mary. She calls me!
The Child. Come with me, little bird.

[*Distant dancing figures appear in the wood.*

Mary. I can hear songs and dancing.
Shawn. Stay with me.
Mary. I think that I would stay — and yet — and yet ——
The Child. Come, little bird with crest of gold.
Mary [*very softly*]. And yet ——
The Child. Come, little bird with silver feet!
[Mary Bruin *dies, and the* Child *goes.*
Shawn. She is dead!
Bridget. Come from that image; body and soul are gone.
You have thrown your arms about a drift of leaves,
Or bole of an ash-tree changed into her image.
Father Hart. Thus do the spirits of evil snatch their prey,
Almost out of the very hand of God;
And day by day their power is more and more,
And men and women leave old paths, for pride
Comes knocking with thin knuckles on the heart.

[*Outside there are dancing figures and, it may be a white bird, and many voices singing:*

The wind blows out of the gates of the day,
The wind blows over the lonely of heart,
And the lonely of heart is withered away;
While the faeries dance in a place apart,
Shaking their milk-white feet in a ring,
Tossing their milk-white arms in the air;
For they hear the wind laugh and murmur and sing
Of a land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue;
But I heard a reed of Coolaney say —
"When the wind has laughed and murmured and sung,
The lonely of heart is withered away." (1894)

## INTO THE TWILIGHT

Out-worn heart, in a time out-worn,
Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;
Laugh heart again in the gray twilight,
Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.

Your mother Eire is always young,
Dew ever shining and twilight gray;
Though hopes fall from you and love decay,
Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.

Come, heart, where hill is heaped upon hill;
For there the mystical brotherhood
Of sun and moon and hollow and wood
And river and stream work out their will;

And God stands winding His lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight;
And love is less kind than the gray twilight,
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.

(1899)

## THE HOST OF THE AIR

O'Driscoll drove with a song
The wild duck and the drake
From the tall and the tufted reeds
Of the drear Hart Lake.

And he saw how the reeds grew dark
At the coming of night tide,
And dreamed of the long dim hair
Of Bridget his bride.

He heard while he sang and dreamed
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.

And he saw young men and young girls
Who danced on a level place
And Bridget his bride among them,
With a sad and a gay face.

The dancers crowded about him,
And many a sweet thing said,
And a young man brought him red wine
And a young girl white bread.

But Bridget drew him by the sleeve,
Away from the merry bands,
To old men playing at cards
With a twinkling of ancient hands.

The bread and the wine had a doom,
For these were the host of the air;
He sat and played in a dream
Of her long dim hair.

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420. **White bird**, the symbol of the soul.

5. **Eire**, Ireland.

*The Host of the Air.* "This poem is founded on an old Gaelic ballad that was sung and translated for me by a woman at Ballisodare in County Sligo" (Yeats's note).

The "Host of the Air" is an especially malignant branch of the fairy race.

4. **Hart Lake**, "a gloomy and tree-bordered pond" five miles south of Sligo.

He played with the merry old men
And thought not of evil chance,
Until one bore Bridget his bride
Away from the merry dance.

He bore her away in his arms,
The handsomest young man there,
And his neck and his breast and his arms
Were drowned in her long dim hair.

O'Driscoll scattered the cards
And out of his dream awoke:
Old men and young men and young girls
Were gone like a drifting smoke;

But he heard high up in the air
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.

(1899)

## HE REMEMBERS FORGOTTEN BEAUTY

When my arms wrap you round I press
My heart upon the loveliness
That has long faded from the world;
The jeweled crowns that kings have hurled
In shadowy pools, when armies fled;
The love-tales wrought with silken thread
By dreaming ladies upon cloth
That has made fat the murderous moth;
The roses that of old time were
Woven by ladies in their hair;
The dew-cold lilies ladies bore
Through many a sacred corridor
Where such gray clouds of incense rose
That only the gods' eyes did not close:
For that pale breast and lingering hand
Come from a more dream-heavy land,
A more dream-heavy hour than this;
And when you sigh from kiss to kiss
I hear white Beauty sighing, too,
For hours when all must fade like dew;
But flame on flame, deep under deep,
Throne over throne, where in half sleep
Their swords upon their iron knees
Brood her high lonely mysteries.

(1899)

## DORA SIGERSON SHORTER
## (1866–1918)

### IRELAND

'Twas the dream of a God,
And the mold of His hand,
That you shook 'neath His stroke,
That you trembled and broke
To this beautiful land.

Here He loosed from His hold
A brown tumult of wings,
Till the wind on the sea
Bore the strange melody
Of an island that sings.

He made you all fair,
You in purple and gold,
You in silver and green,
Till no eye that has seen
Without love can behold.

I have left you behind
In the path of the past,
With the white breath of flowers,
With the best of God's hours,
I have left you at last. (1893)

### THE GYPSIES' ROAD

I shall go on the gypsies' road,
The road that has no ending;
For the sedge is brown on the lone lake side,
The wild geese eastward tending.

I shall go as the unfettered wave,
From shore to shore, forgetting
The grief that lies 'neath a roof-tree's shade,
The years that bring regretting.

No law shall dare my wandering stay,
No man my acres measure;
The world was made for the gypsies' feet,
The winding road for pleasure.

And I shall drift as the pale leaf strayed,
Whither the wild wind listed,
I shall sleep in the dark of the hedge,
'Neath rose and thorn entwisted.

This was a call in the heart of the night,
A whispering dream's dear treasure:
"The world was made for the nomads' feet,
The winding road for pleasure."

I stole at dawn from my roof-tree's shade,
And the cares that it did cover;
I flew to the heart of the fierce north wind,
As a maid will greet her lover.

But a thousand hands did draw me back
And bid me to their tending;
I may not go on the gypsies' road —
The road that has no ending. (1893)

### CEAN DUV DEELISH

Cean duv deelish, beside the sea
I stand and stretch my hands to thee
Across the world.

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*Cean Duv Deelish.* The title is Gaelic for *Dear Black Head.*

The riderless horses race to shore
With thundering hoofs and shuddering, hoar,
Blow manes uncurled.

Cean duv deelish, I cry to thee
Beyond the world, beneath the sea,
Thou being dead.
Where hast thou hidden from the beat
Of crushing hoofs and tearing feet
Thy dear black head?

Cean duv deelish, 'tis hard to pray
With breaking heart from day to day,
And no reply;
When the passionate challenge of sky is cast
In the teeth of the sea and an angry blast
Goes keening by.

God bless the woman, whoever she be,
From the tossing waves will recover thee
And lashing wind.
Who will take thee out of the wind and storm,
Dry thy wet face on her bosom warm
And lips so kind?

I not to know. It is hard to pray,
But I shall for this woman from day to day,
"Comfort my dead,
The sport of the winds and the play of the sea."
I loved thee too well for this thing to be,
O dear black head! (1893)

## THE KINE OF MY FATHER

The kine of my father, they are straying from my keeping;
The young goat's at mischief, but little can I do;
For all through the night did I hear the banshee keening;
O youth of my loving, and is it well with you?

All through the night sat my mother with my sorrow;
"Whisht, it is the storm, O one childeen of my heart!"
My hair with the wind, and my two hands clasped in anguish;
Black head of my darling! too long are we apart.
Were your grave at my feet, I would think it half a blessing;
I could herd then the cattle, and drive the goats away;
Many a Paternoster I would say for your safe-keeping;
I could sleep above your heart until the dawn of day.

I see you on the prairie, hot with thirst and faint with hunger;
The head that I love lying low upon the sand.
The vultures shriek impatient, and the coyote dogs are howling,
Till the blood is pulsing cold within your clenching hand.

I see you on the waters, so white, so still, forsaken,
Your dear eyes unclosing beneath a foreign rain —
A plaything of the winds, you turn and drift unceasing;
No grave for your resting; oh, mine the bitter pain!

All through the night did I hear the banshee keening:
Somewhere you are dying, and nothing can I do;
My hair with the wind, and my two hands clasped in anguish;
Bitter is your trouble — and I am far from you. (1898)

## THE COMFORTERS

When I crept over the hill, broken with tears,
When I crouched down on the grass, dumb in despair,
I heard the soft croon of the wind bend to my ears,
I felt the light kiss of the wind touching my hair.

When I stood lone on the height my sorrow did speak,
As I went down the hill, I cried and I cried,
The soft little hands of the rain stroking my cheek,
The kind little feet of the rain ran by my side.

When I went to thy grave, broken with tears,
When I crouched down in the grass, dumb in despair,
I heard the sweet croon of the wind soft in my ears,
I felt the kind lips of the wind touching my hair.

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18. **keening**, moaning—as for the dead.
*The Kine of My Father.* 3. **banshee keening.** In the folk-lore of Ireland and Scotland, the wailing of a banshee, a fairy creature, foretold death.

11. **Paternoster**, the Lord's prayer in Latin, so-called from the opening words.

When I stood by thy cross, sorrow did speak.
When I went down the long hill, I cried and I cried.
The soft little hands of the rain stroked my pale cheek,
The kind little feet of the rain ran by my side.
(1918)

## ARTHUR SYMONS (1865- )

### JAVANESE DANCERS

Twitched strings, the clang of metal, beaten drums,
Dull, shrill, continuous, disquieting;
And now the stealthy dancer comes
Undulantly with cat-like steps that cling;

Smiling between her painted lids a smile,
Motionless, unintelligible, she twines
Her fingers into mazy lines;
The scarves across her fingers twine the while.

One, two, three, four glide forth, and, to and fro,
Delicately and imperceptibly,
Now swaying gently in a row,
Now interthreading slow and rhythmically,

Still, with fixed eyes, monotonously still,
Mysteriously, with smiles inanimate,
With lingering feet that undulate,
With sinuous fingers, spectral hands that thrill

In measure while the gnats of music whirr,
The little amber-colored dancers move,
Like painted idols seen to stir
By the idolators in a magic grove.
(*1889;* 1892)

### ON THE BEACH

Night, a gray sky, a ghostly sea,
The soft beginning of the rain;
Black on the horizon, sails that wane
Into the distance mistily.

The tide is rising, I can hear
The soft roar broadening far along;
It cries and murmurs in my ear
A sleepy old forgotten song.

Softly the stealthy night descends,
The black sails fade into the sky.
Is not this, where the sea-line ends,
The shore-line of infinity?

I cannot think or dream; the gray
Unending waste of sea and night,
Dull, impotently infinite,
Blots out the very hope of day.
(*1890;* 1892)

### BEFORE THE SQUALL

The wind is rising on the sea,
The windy white foam-dancers leap;
And the sea moans uneasily,
And turns to sleep and cannot sleep.

Ridge after rocky ridge uplifts
Wild hands, and hammers at the land,
Scatters in liquid dust, and drifts
To death among the dusty sand.

On the horizon's nearing line,
Where the sky rests, a visible wall,
Gray in the offing, I divine
The sails that fly before the squall.
(*1890;* 1892)

### EMMY

Emmy's exquisite youth and her virginal air,
Eyes and teeth in the flash of a musical smile,
Come to me out of the past, and I see her there
As I saw her once for a while.

Emmy's laughter rings in my ears, as bright,
Fresh, and sweet as the voice of a mountain brook,
And still I hear her telling us tales that night,
Out of Boccaccio's book.

There, in the midst of the villainous dancing-hall,
Leaning across the table, over the beer,
While the music maddened the whirling skirts of the ball,
As the midnight hour drew near,

There with the women, haggard, painted, and old,
One fresh bud in a garland withered and stale,
She, with her innocent voice and her clear eyes, told
Tale after shameless tale.

And ever the witching smile, to her face beguiled,
Paused and broadened, and broke in a ripple of fun,
And the soul of a child looked out of the eyes of a child,
Or ever the tale was done.

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*Emmy.* 8. **Boccaccio's book**, the *Decameron* (1353), a collection of a hundred tales, some of them "shameless."

O my child, who wronged you first, and began
First the dance of death that you dance so well?
Soul for soul: and I think the soul of a man
Shall answer for yours in hell. (*1891;* 1892)

## AT CARBIS BAY

Out of the night of the sea,
Out of the turbulent night,
A sharp and hurrying wind
Scourges the waters white:
The terror by night.

Out of the doubtful dark,
Out of the night of the land,
What is it breathes and broods,
Hoveringly at hand?
The menace of land.

Out of the night of heaven,
Out of the delicate sky,
Pale and serene the stars
In their silence reply:
The peace of the sky. (*1893;* 1895)

## EPILOGUE: CREDO

Each, in himself, his hour to be and cease
Endures alone, yet few there be who dare,
Sole with themselves, their single burden bear,
All the long day until the night's release.

Yet, ere the night fall, and the shadows close,
This labor of himself is each man's lot;
All a man hath, yet living, is forgot,
Himself he leaves behind him when he goes.

If he have any valiancy within,
If he have made his life his very own,
If he have loved or labored, and have known
A strenuous virtue, or a strenuous sin,

Then, being dead, his life was not all vain,
For he has saved what most desire to lose,
And he has chosen what the few must choose,
Since life, once lived, returns no more again.

For of our time we lose so large a part
In serious trifles, and so oft let slip
The wine of every moment, at the lip
Its moment, and the moment of the heart.

We are awake so little on the earth,
And we shall sleep so long, and rise so late,
If there is any knocking at that gate
Which is the gate of death, the gate of birth.
(*1894;* 1895)

## THE WANDERERS

Wandering, ever wandering,
Their eyelids freshened with the wind of the sea
Blown up the cliffs at sunset, their cheeks cooled
With meditative shadows of hushed leaves
That have been drowsing in the woods all day
And certain fires of sunrise in their eyes.

They wander, and the white roads under them
Crumble into fine dust behind their feet,
For they return not; life, a long white road,
Winds ever from the dark into the dark,
And they, as days, return not; they go on
Forever, with the traveling stars; the night
Curtains them, being wearied, and the dawn
Awakens them unwearied; they go on.
They know the winds of all the earth, they know
The dust of many highways, and the stones
Of cities set for landmarks on the road.
Theirs is the world, and all the glory of it,
Theirs, because they forego it, passing on
Into the freedom of the elements;
Wandering, ever wandering,
Because life holds not anything so good
As to be free of yesterday, and bound
Toward a newborn tomorrow; and they go
Into a world of unknown faces, where
It may be there are faces waiting them,
Faces of friendly strangers, not the long
Intolerable monotony of friends.

The joy of earth is yours, O wanderers,
The only joy of the old earth, to wake,
As each new dawn is patiently renewed,
With foreheads fresh against a fresh young sky,
To be a little further on the road,
A little nearer somewhere, some few steps
Advanced into the future, and removed
By some few counted milestones from the past;
God gives you this good gift, the only gift
That God, being repentant, has to give.

Wanderers, you have the sunrise and the stars;
And we, beneath our comfortable roofs,
Lamplight, and daily fire upon the hearth,
And four walls of a prison, and sure food.
But God has given you freedom, wanderers!
(*1895;* 1897)

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*At Carbis Bay.* Carbis is a bay in Cornwall, southwestern England, near St. Ives.

*Epilogue: Credo.* Cf. Browning's *Two in the Campagna*, page 231; Henley's *Invictus*, page 785; and Kipling's *Tomlinson*, page 886.

*The Wanderers.* Cf. Kipling's *The Explorer*, page 895.

## ARQUES — AFTERNOON

Gently a little breeze begins to creep
Into the valley, and the sleeping trees
Are stirred, and breathe a little in their sleep,
And nod, half-wakened, to the breeze.

Cool little quiet shadows wander out
Across the fields, and dapple with dark trails
The snake-gray road coiled stealthily about
The green hill climbing from the vales.

And faintlier, in this cooler peace of things,
My brooding thoughts, a scattered flock grown few,
Withdrawn upon their melancholy wings,
Float farther off against the blue.

(*1896;* 1897)

## OPALS

My soul is like this cloudy, flaming opal ring.
The fields of earth are in it, green and glimmering,
The waves of the blue sky, night's purple flower of noon,
The vanishing cold scintillations of the moon,
And the red heart that is a flame within a flame.
And as the opal dies, and is reborn the same,
And all the fire that is its life-blood seems to dart
Through the veined variable intricacies of its heart,
And ever wandering ever wanders back again,
So must my swift soul constant to itself remain.
Opal, have I not been as variable as you?
But, cloudy opal flaming green and red and blue,
Are you not ever constant in your varying,
Even as my soul, O captive opal of my ring?

(*1896;* 1899)

## THE OLD WOMEN

They pass upon their old, tremulous feet,
Creeping with little satchels down the street,
And they remember, many years ago,
Passing that way in silks. They wander, slow
And solitary, through the city ways,
And they alone remember those old days
Men have forgotten. In their shaking heads
A dancer of old carnivals yet treads
The measure of past waltzes, and they see
The candles lit again, the patchouli
Sweeten the air, and the warm cloud of musk
Enchant the passing of the passionate dusk.
Then you will see a light begin to creep
Under the earthen eyelids, dimmed with sleep,
And a new tremor, happy and uncouth,
Jerking about the corners of the mouth.
Then the old head drops down again, and shakes,
Muttering.
Sometimes, when the swift gaslight wakes
The dreams and fever of the sleepless town,
A shaking huddled thing in a black gown
Will steal at midnight, carrying with her
Violet little bags of lavender,
Into the tap-room full of noisy light;
Or, at the crowded earlier hour of night,
Sidle, with matches, up to some who stand
About a stage-door, and, with furtive hand,
Appealing: "I too was a dancer, when
Your fathers would have been young gentlemen!"
And sometimes, out of some lean ancient throat,
A broken voice, with here and there a note
Of unspoilt crystal, suddenly will arise
Into the night, while a cracked fiddle cries
Pantingly after; and you know she sings
The passing of light, famous, passing things,
And sometimes, in the hours past midnight, reels
Out of an alley upon staggering heels,
Or into the dark keeping of the stones
About a doorway, a vague thing of bones
And draggled hair.

And all these have been loved.
And not one ruinous body has not moved
The heart of man's desire, nor has not seemed
Immortal in the eyes of one who dreamed
The dream that men call love. This is the end
Of much fair flesh; it is for this you tend
Your delicate bodies many careful years,
To be this thing of laughter and of tears,
To be this living judgment of the dead,
An old gray woman with a shaking head.

(1900)

## THE UNLOVED

These are the women whom no man has loved.
Year after year, day after day has moved
These hearts with many longings, and with tears,
And with content; they have received the years
With empty hands, expecting no good thing;
Life has passed by their doors, not entering.
In solitude, and without vain desire,
They have warmed themselves beside a lonely fire;
And, without scorn, beheld as in a glass

---

*Arques—Afternoon.* Arques is a French village in Normandy, north of the Seine River.

*The Old Women.* 10. **patchouli**, a perfume extracted from an East-Indian mint.

The blown and painted leaves of Beauty pass.
Their souls have been made fragrant with the spice
Of costly virtues lit for sacrifice;
They have accepted Life, the unpaid debt,
And looked for no vain day of reckoning.

Yet
They too in certain windless summer hours
Have felt the stir of dreams, and dreamed the powers
And the exemptions and the miracles
And the cruelty of Beauty. Citadels
Of many-walled and deeply-moated hearts
Have suddenly surrendered to the arts
Of so compelling magic; entering,
They have esteemed it but a little thing
To have won so great a conquest; and with haste
They have cast down, and utterly laid waste,
Tower upon tower, and sapped their roots with flame;
And passed on that eternity of shame
Which is the way of Beauty on the earth.
And they have shaken laughter from its mirth,
To be a sound of trumpets and of horns
Crying the battle-cry of those red morns
Against a sky of triumph.

On some nights
Of delicate Springtide, when the hesitant lights
Begin to fade, and glimmer, and grow warm,
And all the softening air is quick with storm,
And the ardors of the young year, entering in,
Flush the gray earth with buds; when the trees begin
To feel a trouble mounting from their roots,
And all their green life blossoming into shoots,
They too, in some obscure, unblossoming strife,
Have felt the stirring of the sap of life.
And they have wept, with bowed head; in the street
They hear the twittering of little feet,
The rocking of the cradles in their hearts.

This is a mood, and, as a mood, departs
With the dried tears; and they resume the tale
Of the dropt stitches; these must never fail
For a dream's sake; nor, for a memory,
The telling of a patient rosary.
(*1896;* 1900)

## IN THE BAY

The seagulls whiten and dip,
Crying their lonely cry,
At noon in the blue of the bay;
And I hear the slow oars drip,
As the fisherman's boat drifts by,
And the cuckoo calls from the hillside far away.

The white birds cry for the foam,
O white birds crying to me
The cry of my heart evermore,
By perilous seas to roam
To a shore far over the sea,
And I would that my ship went down within sight of the shore! (*1896*)

## IN THE WOOD OF FINVARRA

I have grown tired of sorrow and human tears;
Life is a dream in the night, a fear among fears,
A naked runner lost in a storm of spears.

I have grown tired of rapture and love's desire;
Love is a flaming heart, and its flames aspire
Till they cloud the soul in the smoke of a windy fire.

I would wash the dust of the world in a soft green flood;
Here, between sea and sea, in the fairy wood,
I have found a delicate, wave-green solitude.

Here, in a fairy wood, between sea and sea,
I have heard the song of a fairy bird in a tree,
And the peace that is not in the world has flown to me. (*1896;* 1900)

## MODERN BEAUTY

I am the torch, she saith, and what to me
If the moth die of me? I am the flame
Of Beauty, and I burn that all may see
Beauty, and I have neither joy nor shame,
But live with that clear life of perfect fire
Which is to men the death of their desire.

I am Yseult and Helen, I have seen
Troy burn, and the most loving knight lie dead.

*In the Wood of Finvarra.* This is the last of a group of five poems under the general title *In Ireland.* The scene of the poem is a forest on a point of land, near the village of Finvarra, extending into the Bay of Galway on the western coast of Ireland. Symons visited the spot in August, 1896. Finvarra is the name of the king of the Connaught fairies; cf. Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire,* 375, page 869.

*Modern Beauty.* 7. **Yseult . . . Helen.** The beauty of Yseult, wife of King Mark of Cornwall, made Sir Tristram her devoted lover for his lifetime; that of Helen induced Paris to steal her from her husband and caused the Trojan War. See Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult,* page 442; Swinburne's *Tristram of Lyonesse,* page 707; and note on Browning's *Development,* 3, page 355. 8. **Troy burn.** The burning of Troy by the victorious Greeks is described in Virgil's *Æneid,* Book 2. 8. **most . . . dead.** When Tristram lay mortally wounded in Brittany, Yseult sailed from Cornwall to help him; on her arrival she found him dead.

The world has been my mirror, time has been
My breath upon the glass; and men have said,
Age after age, in rapture and despair,
Love's poor few words, before mine image there.

I live, and am immortal; in mine eyes
The sorrow of the world, and on my lips
The joy of life, mingle to make me wise;
Yet now the day is darkened with eclipse:
Who is there lives for beauty? Still am I
The torch, but where's the moth that still dares die?
(*1899;* 1900)

## THE LOOM OF DREAMS

I broider the world upon a loom,
I broider with dreams my tapestry;
Here in a little lonely room
I am master of earth and sea,
And the planets come to me.

I broider my life into the frame,
I broider my love, thread upon thread;
The world goes by with its glory and shame,
Crowns are bartered and blood is shed;
I sit and broider my dreams instead.

And the only world is the world of my dreams,
And my weaving the only happiness;
For what is the world but what it seems?
And who knows but that God, beyond our guess,
Sits weaving worlds out of loneliness?
(*1900;* 1901)

## LOVE SONG

O woman of my love, I am walking with you on the sand,
And the moon's white on the sand and the foam's white in the sea;
And I am thinking my own thoughts, and your hand is on my hand,
And your heart thinks by my side, and it's not thinking of me.

O woman of my love, the world is narrow and wide,
And I wonder which is the lonelier of us two:
You are thinking of one who is near to your heart, and far from your side;
I am thinking my own thoughts, and they are all thoughts of you.
(*1903;* 1906)

## TO A SEA-GULL

Bird of the fierce delight,
Brother of foam as white
And winged as foam is,
Wheeling again from flight
To some unfooted height
Where your blithe home is;

Bird of the wind and spray,
Crying by night and day
Sorrowful laughter,
How shall man's thought survey
Your will or your wings' way,
Or follow after?

What pride is man's, and why,
Angel of air, should I
Joy to be human?
You walk and swim and fly,
Laugh like a man and cry
Like any woman.

I would your spirit were mine
When your wings dip and shine
Smoothly advancing;
I drink a breathless wine
Of speed in your divine
Aerial dancing.
(*1904;* 1906)

## NIGHT

The night's held breath,
And the stars' steady eyes:
Is it sleep, is it death,
In the earth, in the skies?

In my heart of hope,
In my restless will,
There is that should not stop
Though the earth stood still,

Though the heavens shook aghast,
As the frost shakes a tree,
And a strong wind cast
The stars in the sea.
(*1905;* 1906)

## AMENDS TO NATURE

I have loved colors, and not flowers;
Their motion, not the swallow's wings;
And wasted more than half my hours
Without the comradeship of things.

How is it, now, that I can see,
With love and wonder and delight,
The children of the hedge and tree,
The little lords of day and night?

How is it that I see the roads,
No longer with usurping eyes,
A twilight meeting-place for toads,
A midday mart for butterflies?

I feel, in every midge that hums,
Life, fugitive and infinite,
And suddenly the world becomes
A part of me and I of it.

(1906)

## RUDYARD KIPLING (1865-1936)

### THE BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,*
*Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;*
*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,*
*When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!*

Kamal is out with twenty men to raise the Border side,
And he has lifted the Colonel's mare that is the Colonel's pride.
He has lifted her out of the stable-door between the dawn and the day,
And turned the calkins upon her feet, and ridden her far away.
Then up and spoke the Colonel's son that led a troop of the Guides:
"Is there never a man of all my men can say where Kamal hides?"
Then up and spoke Mohammed Khan, the son of the Ressaldar:
"If ye know the track of the morning-mist, ye know where his pickets are.
"At dusk he harries the Abazai — at dawn he is into Bonair,
"But he must go by Fort Bukloh to his own place to fare,
"So if ye gallop to Fort Bukloh as fast as a bird can fly,
"By the favour of God ye may cut him off ere he win to the Tongue of Jagai.
"But if he be past the Tongue of Jagai, right swiftly turn ye then,
"For the length and the breadth of that grisly plain is sown with Kamal's men.
"There is rock to the left, and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
"And ye may hear a breech-bolt snick where never a man is seen."
The Colonel's son has taken a horse, and a raw rough dun was he,
With the mouth of a bell and the heart of Hell, and the head of the gallows-tree.
The Colonel's son to the Fort has won, they bid him stay to eat —
Who rides at the tail of a Border thief, he sits not long at his meat.
He's up and away from Fort Bukloh as fast as he can fly,
Till he was aware of his father's mare in the gut of the Tongue of Jagai,
Till he was aware of his father's mare with Kamal upon her back,
And when he could spy the white of her eye, he made the pistol crack.
He has fired once, he has fired twice, but the whistling ball went wide.
"Ye shoot like a soldier," Kamal said. "Show now if ye can ride!"
It's up and over the Tongue of Jagai, as blown dust-devils go,
The dun he fled like a stag of ten, but the mare like a barren doe.
The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a maiden plays with a glove.
There was rock to the left and rock to the right, and low lean thorn between,
And thrice he heard a breech-bolt snick tho' never a man was seen.
They have ridden the low moon out of the sky, their hoofs drum up the dawn,
The dun he went like a wounded bull, but the mare like a new-roused fawn.
The dun he fell at a water-course — in a woeful heap fell he,
And Kamal has turned the red mare back, and pulled the rider free.
He has knocked the pistol out of his hand — small room was there to strive,
" 'Twas only by favour of mine," quoth he, "ye rode so long alive:
"There was not a rock for twenty mile, there was not a clump of tree,
"But covered a man of my own men with his rifle cocked on his knee.
"If I had raised my bridle-hand, as I have held it low,
"The little jackals that flee so fast were feasting all in a row.

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*The Ballad of East and West.* From *Departmental Ditties,* copyright 1892, 1893, and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.

The scene of the ballad is the border between Afghanistan and the Northwest Frontier Province of India; it concerns a raid made by the Afghans into British territory and a pursuit into the hostile Afghan wilderness. It is modeled, to a certain extent, on the old ballads of the Scottish border, such as *Kinmont Willie;* see Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border.*

5. **Kamal,** chief of an Afghan tribe. 6. **lifted,** stolen. 8. **calkins,** shoes. 9. **Guides,** the Queen's Own Corps of Guides, a corps of 1400 men recruited from many different races, stationed at Mardan, on the border between India and Afghanistan. 11. **Ressaldar,** native captain in an East-Indian troop. 13. **Abazai . . . Bonair,** villages on the Indian frontier, about forty miles apart. 14. **Fort Bukloh,** a British fort on the border. 16. **Tongue of Jagai,** a mountain ridge in Eastern Afghanistan; see Kipling's *The Drums of the Fore and Aft.*

20. **hear a breech-bolt snick,** hear a breech-bolt click as it is pulled back ready for firing. 32. **stag of ten,** a stag with ten branches on his horns. 34. **snaffle-bars,** the two sections of a jointed bit. 42. **'Twas . . . alive.** Compare the similar situation in Scott's *The Lady of the Lake,* Canto V, Sections 8-12 (lines 170-318).

"If I had bowed my head on my breast, as I have held it high,
"The kite that whistles above us now were gorged till she could not fly."
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "Do good to bird and beast,
"But count who come for the broken meats before thou makest a feast.
"If there should follow a thousand swords to carry my bones away,
"Belike the price of a jackal's meal were more than a thief could pay.
"They will feed their horse on the standing crop, their men on the garnered grain,
"The thatch of the byres will serve their fires when all the cattle are slain.
"But if thou thinkest the price be fair, — thy brethren wait to sup,
"The hound is kin to the jackal-spawn, — howl, dog, and call them up!
"And if thou thinkest the price be high, in steer and gear and stack,
"Give me my father's mare again, and I'll fight my own way back!"
Kamal has gripped him by the hand and set him upon his feet.
"No talk shall be of dogs," said he, "when wolf and grey wolf meet.
"May I eat dirt if thou hast hurt of me in deed or breath;
"What dam of lances brought thee forth to jest at the dawn with Death?"
Lightly answered the Colonel's son: "I hold by the blood of my clan:
"Take up the mare for my father's gift — by God, she has carried a man!"
The red mare ran to the Colonel's son, and nuzzled against his breast;
"We be two strong men," said Kamal then, "but she loveth the younger best.
"So she shall go with a lifter's dower, my turquoise-studded rein,
"My 'broidered saddle and saddle-cloth, and silver stirrups twain."
The Colonel's son a pistol drew, and held it muzzle-end,
"Ye have taken the one from a foe," said he; "Will ye take the mate from a friend?"
"A gift for a gift," said Kamal straight; "a limb for the risk of a limb.
"Thy father has sent his son to me, I'll send my son to him!"
With that he whistled his only son, that dropped from a mountain-crest —
He trod the ling like a buck in spring, and he looked like a lance in rest.
"Now here is thy master," Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the Guides,
"And thou must ride at his left side as shield on shoulder rides.
"Till Death or I cut loose the tie, at camp and board and bed,
"Thy life is his — thy fate it is to guard him with thy head.
"So, thou must eat the White Queen's meat, and all her foes are thine,
"And thou must harry thy father's hold for the peace of the Border-line.
"And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power —
"Belike they will raise thee to Ressaldar when I am hanged in Peshawur."

They have looked each other between the eyes, and there they found no fault,
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on leavened bread and salt:
They have taken the Oath of the Brother-in-Blood on fire and fresh-cut sod,
On the hilt and the haft of the Khyber knife, and the Wondrous Names of God.
The Colonel's son he rides the mare and Kamal's boy the dun,
And two have come back to Fort Bukloh where there went forth but one.
And when they drew to the Quarter-Guard, full twenty swords flew clear —
There was not a man but carried his feud with the blood of the mountaineer.
"Ha' done! ha' done!" said the Colonel's son. "Put up the steel at your sides!
"Last night ye had struck at a Border thief — to-night 'tis a man of the Guides!"

*Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,*
*Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat;*
*But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,*
*When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth.*
(1889)

## DANNY DEEVER

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes you look so white, so white?" said Files-on-Parade.

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54. **byres,** cow-stables. 57. **gear,** equipment. 67. **lifter's.** horse-thief's. 74. **ling,** barren mountain-side.

79. **White Queen's meat,** the rations of Queen Victoria's soldiers. 82. **Peshawur,** military center and only city in the Northwest Frontier Province of India, at the foot of the Khyber Pass. 86. **Khyber knife,** an Afghan weapon with a three-foot triangular blade.

*Danny Deever.* From *The Barrack-Room Ballads,* copyright 1892 and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.

1. **Files-on-Parade,** private soldier.

"I'm dreadin' what I've got to watch," the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're hangin' Danny Deever, you can hear the Dead March play,
The regiment's in 'ollow square — they're hangin' him to-day;
They've taken of his buttons off an' cut his stripes away,
An' they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What makes the rear-rank breathe so 'ard?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's bitter cold, it's bitter cold," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What makes that front-rank man fall down?" said Files-on-Parade.
"A touch o' sun, a touch o' sun," the Colour-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, they are marchin' of 'im round,
They 'ave 'alted Danny Deever by 'is coffin on the ground;
An' 'e'll swing in 'arf a minute for a sneakin' shootin' hound —
O they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'!

"'Is cot was right-'and cot to mine," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's sleepin' out an' far to-night," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"I've drunk 'is beer a score o' times," said Files-on-Parade.
"'E's drinkin' bitter beer alone," the Colour-Sergeant said.
They are hangin' Danny Deever, you must mark 'im to 'is place,
For 'e shot a comrade sleepin' — you must look 'im in the face;
Nine 'undred of 'is county an' the Regiment's disgrace,
While they're hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.

"What's that so black agin the sun?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny fightin' 'ard for life," the Colour-Sergeant said.
"What's that that whimpers over'ead?" said Files-on-Parade.
"It's Danny's soul that's passin' now," the Colour-Sergeant said.
For they're done with Danny Deever, you can 'ear the quickstep play,
The regiment's in column, an' they're marchin' us away;
Ho! the young recruits are shakin', an' they'll want their beer to-day,
After hangin' Danny Deever in the mornin'.
(1890)

## TOMMY

I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, "We serve no red-coats here."
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
I outs into the street again an' to myself sez I:
O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, go away";
But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play,
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play —
O it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They gave a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls!
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, wait outside";
But it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide —
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, the troopship's on the tide,
O it's "Special train for Atkins" when the trooper's on the tide.

Yes, makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
An' hustlin' drunken soldiers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.
Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?"
But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll —
The drums begin to roll, my boys, the drums begin to roll,
O it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll.

*Tommy.* From *The Barrack-Room Ballads,* copyright 1892 and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.
2. **publican,** proprietor of a public-house, or "saloon." 6. **Mister Atkins.** Thomas Atkins, originally the hypothetical name used in instructing soldiers how to fill out account blanks, etc., has become the nickname for a private in the British army. Cf. Meredith's "*Atkins,*" page 607. 12. **stalls,** orchestra seats. 22. **"Thin . . . 'eroes."** A war correspondent, W. H. Russell, used this phrase in describing the 93d Highlanders in action at the Battle of Balaklava, Crimean War. Cf. Tennyson's *The Charge of the Light Brigade,* page 95.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints;
  While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, fall be'ind,"
  But it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind —
  There's trouble in the wind, my boys, there's trouble in the wind,
  O it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all:
We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.
Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face
The Widow's Uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.
  For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute!"
  But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;
  An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
  An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool — you bet that Tommy sees! (1890)

## "FUZZY-WUZZY"

### (SOUDAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE)

We've fought with many men acrost the seas,
  An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
  But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.
We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:
  'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Sua*kim*,
  An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.
    So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
    You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
    We gives you your certificate, an' if you want it signed
    We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.

We took our chanst among the Kyber 'ills,
  The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,
The Burman give us Irriwaddy chills,
  An' a Zulu *impi* dished us up in style:
But all we ever got from such as they
  Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller;
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
  But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.
    Then 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis and the kid;
    Our orders was to break you, an' of course we went an' did.
    We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't 'ardly fair;
    But for all the odds agin' you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you broke the square.

'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,
  'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,
So *we* must certify the skill 'e's shown
  In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords:
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
  With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
An 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
  Will last an 'ealthy Tommy for a year.
    So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which are no more,
    If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to deplore.
    But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain fair,
    For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!

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36. **Widow**, an affectionate nickname applied to Queen Victoria by her soldiers.

*"Fuzzy-Wuzzy."* From *Departmental Ditties*, copyright 1892, 1893, and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.

In 1881 the tribesmen of the Soudan, a territory along the southern border of the Sahara Desert and the upper waters of the Nile, rebelled against English and Egyptian rule. Under the leadership of a prophet called the Mahdi, they defeated an army under General Hicks in 1883, besieged and massacred General Gordon at Khartum in 1885, and remained unconquered until 1898. Because of their long, curly hair, they were called "Fuzzy-Wuzzies" by the British troops.

**Soudan . . . Force**, an army, under the leadership of General Graham, sent in 1884 to relieve General Gordon, who was besieged by the Soudanese at Khartum.

3. **Paythan**, the Afghans; see *The Ballad of East and West*, page 878. **Zulu**, natives of southeast Africa, against whom the British conducted a campaign in 1879. **Burmese.** Because of outrages against British subjects in Burma, England conquered and annexed Burma after a brief campaign in 1885; see note on *Mandalay*, page 883. 5. **ha'porth's change.** A half-penny's worth of change would be reckoned in fractions of a cent.

7. **Suakim**, a seaport on the Red Sea, the headquarters of the British and Egyptian army operating against the Soudanese. 13. **Kyber 'ills**, the mountains on the Afghanistan border; see *The Ballad of East and West*, page 878. 14. **Boers**, the Dutch settlers in South Africa with whom the British engaged in various minor conflicts before the Boer War of 1899-1902; they were celebrated for their deadliness with the rifle at long range. 15. **Irriwaddy**, the chief river in Burma. 16. **Zulu impi.** The Zulu army, organized into regiments, or *impis*, overwhelmed a British force of 4000 men during the early part of the 1879 campaign in southeast Africa. 23. **Martinis**, British rifles, named after the Swiss inventor. 24. **broke the square**, pierced the hollow square, the favorite British formation in open warfare; the Soudanese accomplished this feat in a battle at Tamai, 1884.

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e 's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
An' 'e 's generally shammin' when 'e 's dead.
'E 's a daisy, 'e 's a ducky, 'e 's a lamb!
'E 's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree,
'E 's the on'y thing that doesn't give a damn
For a Regiment o' British Infantree!
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air —
You big black boundin' beggar — for you broke a British square!

(1890)

## GUNGA DIN

You may talk o' gin and beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But when it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din.
He was "Din! Din! Din!
"You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
"Hi! *Slippy hitherao!*
"Water, get it! *Panee lao!*
"You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!"

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a piece o' twisty rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted "Harry By!"
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
"You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
"You put some *juldee* in it
"Or I'll *marrow* you this minute
"If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done;
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is mussick on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire,"
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust-spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could 'ear the front-ranks shout,
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I sha'n't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' 'e plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water green.
It was crawlin' and it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
" 'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
" 'E's chawin' up the ground,
"An' 'e's kickin' all around:
"For Gawd's sake, git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a dooli lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died,
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
In the place where 'e is gone —

---

*Gunga Din.* From *Departmental Ditties*, copyright 1892, 1893, and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.
3. **Aldershot it,** live comfortably in Aldershot, a military camp in northeast Hampshire. 12. **bhisti,** a Mohammedan regimental water-carrier; the word means *heavenly one.* 15. **hitherao,** rascal. 16. **Panee lao,** bring water quickly. 27. **Harry By,** Oh, brother! 29. **wopped,** hit.

32. **juldee,** speed. 33. **marrow,** hit. 41. **mussick,** water-skin. 70. **dooli,** stretcher for conveying the wounded.

Where it's always double drill and no canteen.
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to poor damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in hell from Gunga Din!
Yes, Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Though I've belted you an' flayed you,
By the livin' God that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

(1890)

## MANDALAY

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea,
There's a Burma girl a-settin', and I know she thinks o' me;
For the wind is in the palm-trees, and the temple-bells they say:
"Come you back, you British soldier; come you back to Mandalay!"

Come you back to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay:
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay?
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

'Er petticoat was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,
An' 'er name was Supi-yaw-lat — jes' the same as Theebaw's Queen,
An' I seed her first a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot:

Bloomin' idol made o' mud —
Wot they called the Great Gawd Budd —
Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud!
On the road to Mandalay . . .

When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was droppin' slow,
She'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing "*Kulla-lo-lo!*"
With 'er arm upon my shoulder an' 'er cheek agin my cheek
We useter watch the steamers an' the *hathis* pilin' teak.

Elephints a-pilin' teak
In the sludgy, squdgy creek,
Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf afraid to speak!
On the road to Mandalay . . .

But that's all shove be'ind me — long ago an' fur away,
An' there ain't no 'busses runnin' from the Bank to Mandalay;
An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year soldier tells:
"If you've 'eard the East a-callin', you won't never 'eed naught else."

No! you won't 'eed nothin' else
But them spicy garlic smells,
An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinkly temple-bells;
On the road to Mandalay . . .

I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gritty pavin'-stones,
An' the blasted Henglish drizzle wakes the fever in my bones;
Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the Strand,
An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?

Beefy face an' grubby 'and —
Law! wot do they understand?
I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land!
On the road to Mandalay . . .

Ship me somewheres east of Suez, where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments an' a man can raise a thirst;
For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be —
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, looking lazy at the sea;

On the road to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay,
With our sick beneath the awnings when we went to Mandalay!

---

82. **Lazarushian-leather,** an example of army slang; Din's skin suggested Russian leather.

*Mandalay.* From *The Barrack-Room Ballads,* copyright 1892 and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.

England conquered and annexed Burma in 1885-86; since then a British force of occupation has been stationed there. The two chief cities are Rangoon, near the mouth of the Irrawaddy River, and Mandalay, on the river about 375 miles north of Rangoon.

1. **Moulmein Pagoda,** a Buddhist temple in Moulmein (Maulmain), across the Gulf of Martaban from Rangoon. 6. **old Flotilla,** the boats of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, plying from Rangoon to Mandalay. 12. **Theebaw's Queen.** Thebaw, king of Burma from 1876 to 1885, was deposed by the English; his wife, Supaiyah Lat, was notorious for her cruelty. 16. **Budd,** Buddha, worshiped by most Burmese.

22. **hathis,** elephants, trained to stack logs of teak, a hard wood used in ship construction, in lumber-yards. 37. **Chelsea,** a district on the Thames above Westminster in London. **Strand,** a thoroughfare connecting Westminster with Fleet Street.

O the road to Mandalay!
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay! (1890)

## THE CONUNDRUM OF THE WORKSHOPS

When the flush of a new-born sun fell first on Eden's green and gold,
Our father Adam sat under the Tree and scratched with a stick in the mould;
And the first rude sketch that the world had seen was joy to his mighty heart,
Till the Devil whispered behind the leaves, "It's pretty, but is it Art?"

Wherefore he called to his wife, and fled to fashion his work anew —
The first of his race who cared a fig for the first, most dread review;
And he left his lore to the use of his sons — and that was a glorious gain
When the Devil chuckled "Is it Art?" in the ear of the branded Cain.

They builded a tower to shiver the sky and wrench the stars apart,
Till the Devil grunted behind the bricks: "It's striking, but is it Art?"
The stone was dropped at the quarry-side and the idle derrick swung,
While each man talked of the aims of Art, and each in an alien tongue.

They fought and they talked in the North and the South; they talked and they fought in the West,
Till the waters rose on the pitiful land, and the poor Red Clay had rest —
Had rest till the dank blank-canvas dawn when the dove was preened to start,
And the Devil bubbled below the keel: "It's human, but is it Art?"

The tale is as old as the Eden Tree — and new as the new-cut tooth —
For each man knows ere his lip-thatch grows he is master of Art and Truth;
And each man hears as the twilight nears, to the beat of his dying heart,
The Devil drum on the darkened pane: "You did it, but was it Art?"

We have learned to whittle the Eden Tree to the shape of a surplice-peg,
We have learned to bottle our parents twain in the yelk of an addled egg,
We know that the tail must wag the dog, for the horse is drawn by the cart;
But the Devil whoops, as he whooped of old: "It's clever, but is it Art?"

When the flicker of London sun falls faint on the Club-room's green and gold,
The sons of Adam sit them down and scratch with their pens in the mould —
They scratch with their pens in the mould of their graves, and the ink and the anguish start,
For the Devil mutters behind the leaves: "It's pretty, but is it Art?"

Now, if we could win to the Eden Tree where the Four Great Rivers flow,
And the Wreath of Eve is red on the turf as she left it long ago,
And if we could come when the sentry slept and softly scurry through,
By the favour of God we might know as much — as our father Adam knew!

## ENVOY

There's a whisper down the field where the year has shot her yield,
And the ricks stand grey to the sun,
Singing: "Over then, come over, for the bee has quit the clover,
"And your English summer's done."

You have heard the beat of the off-shore wind,
And the thresh of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song — how long? how long?
Pull out on the trail again!
Ha' done with the Tents of Shem, dear lass,
We've seen the seasons through,
And it's time to turn on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
Pull out, pull out, on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new!

---

*The Conundrum of the Workshops.* From *Departmental Ditties*, copyright 1892, 1893, and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.
9. **tower**, the tower of Babel, the builders of which were punished by being forced to talk in different languages; see *Genesis*, 11:4-9. 14. **waters rose**, the Flood; see *Genesis*, 7:10-12. 15. **dove**, the one sent out by Noah to discover dry land (*Genesis*, 8:8-12).

21. **surplice-peg**, a peg in the sacristy of a church on which surplices, worn by the clergy and choir, are hung. 29. **Four . . . Rivers**, the rivers that flowed out from the Garden of Eden (*Genesis*, 2:10-14).

*Envoy.* From *Departmental Ditties*, copyright 1892, 1893, and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.
This poem is sometimes published under the title *The Long Trail.*
1. **shot her yield**, harvested her crop of grain. 9. **Tents of Shem**, houses with servants; *Genesis*, 9:27.—"God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."

It's North you may run to the rime-ringed sun,
Or South to the blind Horn's hate;
Or East all the way into Mississippi Bay,
Or West to the Golden Gate —
Where the blindest bluffs hold good, dear lass,
And the wildest tales are true,
And the men bulk big on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
And life runs large on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new.

The days are sick and cold, and the skies are grey and old,
And the twice-breathed airs blow damp;
And I'd sell my tired soul for the bucking beam-sea roll
Of a black Bilbao tramp,
With her load-line over her hatch, dear lass,
And a drunken Dago crew,
And her nose held down on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
From Cadiz south on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new.

There be triple ways to take, of the eagle or the snake,
Or the way of a man with a maid;
But the sweetest way to me is a ship's upon the sea
In the heel of the North-East Trade.
Can you hear the crash on her bows, dear lass,
And the drum of the racing screw,
As she ships it green on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
As she lifts and 'scends on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new?

See the shaking funnels roar, with the Peter at the fore,
And the fenders grind and heave,
And the derricks clack and grate, as the tackle hooks the crate,
And the fall-rope whines through the sheave;
It's "Gang-plank up and in," dear lass,
It's "Hawsers warp her through!"
And it's "All clear aft" on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're backing down on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new.

O the mutter overside, when the port-fog holds us tied,
And the sirens hoot their dread!
When foot by foot we creep o'er the hueless viewless deep
To the sob of the questing lead!
It's down by the Lower Hope, dear lass,
With the Gunfleet Sands in view,
Till the Mouse swings green on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
And the Gull Light lifts on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new.

O the blazing tropic night, when the wake's a welt of light
That holds the hot sky tame,
And the steady fore-foot snores through the planet-powdered floors
Where the scared whale flukes in flame!
Her plates are scarred by the sun, dear lass,
And her ropes are taut with the dew,
For we're booming down on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're sagging south on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new.

Then home, get her home, where the drunken rollers comb,
And the shouting seas drive by,
And the engines stamp and ring, and the wet bows reel and swing,
And the Southern Cross rides high!
Yes, the old lost stars wheel back, dear lass,
That blaze in the velvet blue.
They're all old friends on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
They're God's own guides on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new.

Fly forward, O my heart, from the Foreland to the Start —
We're steaming all too slow,

---

14. **blind Horn,** Cape Horn, at the extremity of South America, dangerous for mariners because of storms. 23. **beam-sea,** waves coming at right angles to the ship's course. 24. **Bilbao tramp,** a slow freight vessel hailing from Bilbao, a port on the northern coast of Spain. A tramp picks up cargo wherever it can be found. 25. **load-line . . . hatch.** The load-line is a line on the side of the ship to mark the depth to which the cargo causes her to sink. The hatch, or opening to the hold, is above the level of the deck. The load-line is normally at or just above the water-line; hence a roll bringing the load-line above the hatch would happen only in a very rough sea. 26. **Dago,** a term applied by the British sailor to Latin peoples—French, Spanish, Italian, etc. 28. **Cadiz,** a peninsula which forms the harbor of Cadiz in Spain. 29. **triple ways.** See *Proverbs*, 30:18-19.—"There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: the way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid." 32. **North-East Trade,** the regular wind which, in the northern hemisphere, blows toward the equator. 37. **the Peter at the fore,** the Blue Peter, a blue flag with a white square in the center, hoisted on the foremost head to indicate that the ship is about to sail.

40. **fall-rope . . . sheave.** The fall-rope passes from the hoisting winch through a pulley, or sheave, at the head of the derrick employed in loading cargo. 49-52. **Lower Hope . . . Gull Light,** points on the route from the London docks, down the Thames River, into the English Channel; the Mouse is a lightship marking the course. 56. **whale . . . flame.** When in tropic seas a whale beats its tail (flukes) on the water as it dives, the spray thrown up shines in a brilliant phosphorescent glow. 61. **comb,** break. 64. **Southern Cross,** a constellation visible only in the southern hemisphere. 69. **Foreland . . . Start,** capes at the northern and southern extremities of the Devon coast on the English Channel.

And it's twenty thousand mile to our little lazy isle
Where the trumpet-orchids blow!
You have heard the call of the off-shore wind
And the voice of the deep-sea rain;
You have heard the song: How long? how long?
Pull out on the trail again!

The Lord knows what we may find, dear lass,
And The Deuce knows what we may do —
But we're back once more on the old trail, our own trail, the out trail,
We're down, hull-down, on the Long Trail — the trail that is always new.

(1892)

## TOMLINSON

Now Tomlinson gave up the ghost in his house in Berkeley Square,
And a Spirit came to his bedside and gripped him by the hair —
A Spirit gripped him by the hair and carried him far away,
Till he heard as the roar of a rain-fed ford the roar of the Milky Way:
Till he heard the roar of the Milky Way die down and drone and cease,
And they came to the Gate within the Wall where Peter holds the keys.
"Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer loud and high
"The good that ye did for the sake of men or ever ye came to die —
"The good that ye did for the sake of men in little earth so lone!"
And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed bone.

"O I have a friend on earth," he said, "that was my priest and guide,
"And well would he answer all for me if he were by my side."
— "For that ye strove in neighbour-love it shall be written fair,
But now ye wait at Heaven's Gate and not in Berkeley Square:
"Though we called your friend from his bed this night, he could not speak for you,
"For the race is run by one and one and never by two and two."
Then Tomlinson looked up and down, and little gain was there,
For the naked stars grinned overhead, and he saw that his soul was bare.
The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it cut him like a knife,
And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his good in life.
"O this I have read in a book," he said, "and that was told to me,
"And this I have thought that another man thought of a Prince in Muscovy."
The good souls flocked like homing doves and bade him clear his path,
And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness and wrath.
"Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought," he said, "and the tale is yet to run:
"By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer — what ha' ye done?"
Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and little good it bore,
For the Darkness stayed at his shoulder-blade and Heaven's Gate before: —
"O this I have felt, and this I have guessed, and this I have heard men say,
"And this they wrote that another man wrote of a carl in Norroway."
"Ye have read, ye have felt, ye have guessed, good lack! Ye have hampered Heaven's Gate;
"There's little room between the stars in idleness to prate!
"O none may reach by hired speech of neighbour, priest, and kin
"Through borrowed deed to God's good meed that lies so fair within;
"Get hence, get hence to the Lord of Wrong, for the doom has yet to run,
"And . . . the faith that ye share with Berkeley Square uphold you, Tomlinson!"

. . . . .

The Spirit gripped him by the hair, and sun by sun they fell
Till they came to the belt of Naughty Stars that rim the mouth of Hell.
The first are red with pride and wrath, the next are white with pain,
But the third are black with clinkered sin that cannot burn again:
They may hold their path, they may leave their path, and never a soul to mark,
They may burn or freeze, but they must not cease in the Scorn of the Outer Dark.
The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it nipped him to the bone,

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*Tomlinson.* From *Departmental Ditties*, copyright 1892, 1893, and 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.

1. **Berkeley Square,** a residential section in London, distinguished by its eminent respectability.

22. **Muscovy,** Russia. The Prince is sometimes identified with Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), noted for his mildly radical social doctrines. 30. **carl in Norroway.** This has been taken to refer to Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), whose plays, dealing frankly with social problems, were much discussed in Tomlinson's England. A carl in early times was a man of the peasantry, or common people. 35. **doom,** judgment.

And he yearned to the flare of Hell-gate there as the light of his own hearth-stone.
The Devil he sat behind the bars, where the desperate legions drew,
But he caught the hasting Tomlinson and would not let him through.
"Wot ye the price of good pit-coal that I must pay?" said he,
"That ye rank yoursel' so fit for Hell and ask no leave of me?
"I am all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that ye should give me scorn,
"For I strove with God for your First Father the day that he was born.
"Sit down, sit down upon the slag, and answer loud and high
"The harm that ye did to the Sons of Men or ever you came to die."
And Tomlinson looked up and up, and saw against the night
The belly of a tortured star blood-red in Hell-Mouth light;
And Tomlinson looked down and down, and saw beneath his feet
The frontlet of a tortured star milk-white in Hell-Mouth heat.
"O I had a love on earth," said he, "that kissed me to my fall;
"And if ye would call my love to me I know she would answer all."
—"All that ye did in love forbid it shall be written fair,
"But now ye wait at Hell-Mouth Gate and not in Berkeley Square:
"Though we whistled your love from her bed to-night, I trow she would not run,
"For the sin ye do by two and two ye must pay for one by one!"
The Wind that blows between the Worlds, it cut him like a knife,
And Tomlinson took up the tale and spoke of his sin in life:—
"Once I ha' laughed at the power of Love and twice at the grip of the Grave,
"And thrice I ha' patted my God on the head that men might call me brave."
The Devil he blew on a brandered soul and set it aside to cool:—
"Do ye think I would waste my good pit-coal on the hide of a brain-sick fool?
"I see no worth in the hobnailed mirth or the jolthead jest ye did
"That I should waken my gentlemen that are sleeping three on a grid."
Then Tomlinson looked back and forth, and there was little grace,
For Hell-Gate filled the houseless soul with the Fear of Naked Space.
"Nay, this I ha' heard," quo' Tomlinson, "and this was noised abroad;
"And this I ha' got from a Belgian book on the word of a dead French lord."
—"Ye ha' heard, ye ha' read, ye ha' got, good lack! and the tale begins afresh—
"Have ye sinned one sin for the pride o' the eye or the sinful lust of the flesh?"
Then Tomlinson he gripped the bars and yammered, "Let me in—
"For I mind that I borrowed my neighbour's wife to sin the deadly sin."
The Devil he grinned behind the bars, and banked the fires high:
"Did ye read of that sin in a book?" said he; and Tomlinson said "Ay!"
The Devil he blew upon his nails, and the little devils ran,
And he said, "Go husk this whimpering thief that comes in the guise of a man:
"Winnow him out 'twixt star and star, and sieve his proper worth:
There's sore decline in Adam's line if this be spawn of earth."
Empusa's crew, so naked-new they may not face the fire,
But weep that they bin too small to sin to the height of their desire,
Over the coal they chased the Soul, and racked it all abroad,
As children rifle a caddis-case or the raven's foolish hoard.
And back they came with the tattered Thing, as children after play,
And they said: "The soul that he got from God he had bartered clean away.
"We have threshed a stook of print and book, and winnowed a chattering wind
"And many a soul wherefrom he stole, but his we cannot find:
"We have handled him, we have dandled him, we have seared him to the bone,
"And Sire, if tooth and nail show truth he has no soul of his own."
The Devil he bowed his head on his breast and rumbled deep and low:—
"I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should bid him go.
"Yet close we lie, and deep we lie, and if I gave him place,
"My gentlemen that are so proud would flout me to my face;
"They'd call my house a common stews and me a careless host,
"And—I would not anger my gentlemen for the sake of a shiftless ghost."

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47. **Wot**, know. 49. **o'er sib**, too closely related. 67. **brandered**, broiled. 70. **grid**, a gridiron used for broiling.

85. **Empusa**, a monster, with one foot of brass and another of an ass, that tormented souls in the Greek underworld. 88. **caddis-case**, a covering made of sticks or stones by the larva of the caddis-fly. 91. **stook**, stack, pile.

The Devil he looked at the mangled Soul that prayed to feel the flame,
And he thought of Holy Charity, but he thought of his own good name:—
"Now ye could haste my coal to waste, and sit ye down to fry.
"Did ye think of that theft for yourself?" said he; and Tomlinson said "Ay!"
The Devil he blew an outward breath, for his heart was free from care:—
"Ye have scarce the soul of a louse," he said, "but the roots of sin are there.
"And for that sin should ye come in were I the lord alone.
"But sinful pride has rule inside — ay, mightier than my own.
"Honour and Wit, fore-damned they sit, to each his Priest and Whore;
"Nay, scarce I dare myself go there, and you they'd torture sore.
"Ye are neither spirit nor spirk," he said; "ye are neither book nor brute —
"Go, get ye back to the flesh again for the sake of Man's repute.
"I'm all o'er-sib to Adam's breed that I should mock your pain,
"But look that ye win to worthier sin ere ye come back again.
"Get hence, the hearse is at your door — the grim black stallions wait —
"They bear your clay to place to-day. Speed, lest ye come too late!
"Go back to Earth with a lip unsealed — go back with an open eye,
"And carry my word to the Sons of Men or ever ye come to die:
"That the sin they do by two and two they must pay for one by one,
"And . . . the God that you took from a printed book be with you, Tomlinson!"

(1892)

## ENVOY

When Earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are twisted and dried,
When the oldest colours have faded, and the youngest critic has died,
We shall rest, and, faith, we shall need it — lie down for an æon or two,
Till the Master of All Good Workmen shall put us to work anew.

And those that were good shall be happy: they shall sit in a golden chair;
They shall splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair.
They shall find real saints to draw from — Magdalene, Peter, and Paul;
They shall work for an age at a sitting and never be tired at all!

And only the Master shall praise us, and only the Master shall blame;
And no one shall work for money, and no one shall work for fame,
But each for the joy of the working, and each, in his separate star,
Shall draw the Thing as he sees It for the God of Things as They are!

(1892)

## THE LAST CHANTEY

"And there was no more sea."

Thus said the Lord in the Vault above the Cherubim,
Calling to the Angels and the Souls in their degree:
"Lo! Earth has passed away
On the smoke of Judgment Day.
That Our word may be established shall We gather up the sea?"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Plague upon the hurricane that made us furl and flee!
But the war is done between us,
In the deep the Lord hath seen us —
Our bones we'll leave the barracout', and God may sink the sea!"

Then said the soul of Judas that betrayéd Him:
"Lord, hast Thou forgotten Thy covenant with me?
How once a year I go
To cool me on the floe?
And Ye take my day of mercy if Ye take away the sea."

Then said the soul of the Angel of the Off-shore Wind:
(He that bits the thunder when the bull-mouthed breakers flee):
"I have watch and ward to keep

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111. **spirk**, vegetable.
*Envoy*. Copyright 1892 by Rudyard Kipling.

*The Last Chantey*. Copyright 1893 by Rudyard Kipling.
A chantey (pronounced "shanty") is a sailor's ballad to the rhythm of which the anchor is raised and the sails reefed or set.
**And . . . sea**, from the description in *Revelation* (21:1) of the end of the world. 1. **Cherubim**, a high order of angels. 10. **barracout'**, the barracuda, a carnivorous fish of the Pacific and West Indian waters. 13-14. **once . . . floe.** According to legend Judas was released from infernal torment once a year and allowed to spend each Christmas Day on an iceberg. Cf. Arnold's *Saint Brandan*, page 481. 17. **bits**, checks.

O'er Thy wonders on the deep,
And Ye take mine honour from me if Ye take away the sea!"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners:
"Nay, but we were angry, and a hasty folk are we.
If we worked the ship together
Till she foundered in foul weather,
Are we babes that we should clamour for a vengeance on the sea?"

Then said the souls of the slaves that men threw overboard:
"Kennelled in the picaroon a weary band were we;
But Thy arm was strong to save,
And it touched us on the wave,
And we drowsed the long tides idle till Thy Trumpets tore the sea."

Then cried the soul of the stout Apostle Paul to God:
"Once we frapped a ship, and she laboured woundily.
There were fourteen score of these,
And they blessed Thee on their knees,
When they learned Thy Grace and Glory under Malta by the sea!"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Plucking at their harps, and they plucked unhandily:
"Our thumbs are rough and tarred,
And the tune is something hard —
May we lift a Deepsea Chantey such as seamen use at sea?"

Then said the souls of the gentlemen-adventurers —
Fettered wrist to bar all for red iniquity:
"Ho, we revel in our chains
O'er the sorrow that was Spain's;
Heave or sink it, leave or drink it, we were masters of the sea!"

Up spake the soul of a grey Gothavn 'speckshioner —
(He that led the flenching in the fleets of fair Dundee):
"Oh, the ice-blink white and near,
And the bowhead breaching clear!
Will Ye whelm them all for wantonness that wallow in the sea?"

Loud sang the souls of the jolly, jolly mariners,
Crying: "Under Heaven, here is neither lead nor lee!
Must we sing for evermore
On the windless, glassy floor?
Take back your golden fiddles and we'll beat to open sea!"

Then stooped the Lord, and He called the good sea up to Him,
And 'stablished His borders unto all eternity,
That such as have no pleasure
For to praise the Lord by measure,
They may enter into galleons and serve Him on the sea.

*Sun, Wind, and Cloud shall fail not from the face of it,*
*Stinging, ringing spindrift, nor the fulmar flying free;*
*And the ships shall go abroad*
*To the Glory of the Lord*
*Who heard the silly sailor-folk and gave them back their sea!* (1892)

## THE KING

"Farewell, Romance!" the Cave-men said;
"With bone well carved he went away,
"Flint arms the ignoble arrowhead,
"And jasper tips the spear to-day.
"Changed are the Gods of Hunt and Dance,
"And he with these. Farewell, Romance!"

"Farewell, Romance!" the Lake-folk sighed;
"We lift the weight of flatling years;
"The caverns of the mountain-side
"Hold Him who scorns our hutted piers.
"Lost hills whereby we dare not dwell,
"Guard ye his rest. Romance, Farewell!"

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27. **picaroon**, a pirate-ship. 32. **frapped a ship.** *Acts* 27 describes how the ship on which St. Paul was a passenger was wrapped about the hull with cable (frapped) to keep it from breaking apart in a storm. **woundily**, excessively. 35. **Malta**, the island in the Mediterranean where Paul's ship was wrecked. 41. **gentlemen-adventurers**, members of the great 16th century trading companies that came often into conflict with Spanish interests in the New World. 44. **sorrow . . . Spain's**, the defeat of the Spanish Armada by the English fleet, 1588. 46. **Gothavn 'speckshioner.** Gothavn is a port in northern Greenland; a specksioneer is the chief harpooner on a whaling vessel who directs the operation of flenching the whale—i.e., cutting the blubber from the bones.

47. **Dundee**, the Scottish whaling port. 49. **bowhead**, the Greenland whale. **breaching**, breaking the water, as by leaping out. 52. **lead nor lea**, a good place neither to go nor to stay. A lead (pronounced "leed") is an open channel ahead of a ship; a lea is a sheltered anchorage. 54. **glassy floor.** See *Revelation*, 4:6.—"And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." 62. **spindrift**, spray blown from the crests of waves. **fulmar**, an ocean bird akin to the petrel.

*The King.* Copyright 1899 by Rudyard Kipling. Compare De Tabley's *Conclusion*, page 759.

5. **Gods . . . Dance.** It is assumed that the gods of prehistoric man were hunting gods and that they were propitiated by ceremonial dances. 7. **Lake-folk.** Many traces remain of prehistoric inhabitants of Switzerland who lived in villages built on piles, or piers (line 10), near the shores of the lakes.

"Farewell, Romance!" the Soldier spoke;
"By sleight of sword we may not win,
"But scuffle 'mid uncleanly smoke
"Of arquebus and culverin.
"Honour is lost, and none may tell
"Who paid good blows. Romance, farewell!"

"Farewell, Romance!" the Traders cried;
"Our keels have lain with every sea;
"The dull-returning wind and tide
"Heave up the wharf where we would be;
"The known and noted breezes swell
"Our trudging sail. Romance, farewell!"

"Good-bye, Romance!" the Skipper said;
"He vanished with the coal we burn.
"Our dial marks full-steam ahead,
"Our speed is timed to half a turn.
"Sure as the ferried barge we ply
"'Twixt port and port. Romance, good-bye!"

"Romance!" the season-tickets mourn,
"*He* never ran to catch his train,
"But passed with coach and guard and horn—
"And left the local—late again!"
Confound Romance! . . . And all unseen
Romance brought up the nine-fifteen.

His hand was on the lever laid,
His oil-can soothed the worrying cranks,
His whistle waked the snowbound grade,
His fog-horn cut the reeking Banks;
By dock and deep and mine and mill
The Boy-god reckless laboured still!

Robed, crowned and throned, He wove his spell,
Where heart-blood beat or hearth-smoke curled,
With unconsidered miracle,
Hedged in a backward-gazing world:
Then taught his chosen bard to say:
"Our King was with us—yesterday!" (1894)

## THE SONG OF THE BANJO

You couldn't pack a Broadwood half a mile—
You mustn't leave a fiddle in the damp—
You couldn't raft an organ up the Nile,
And play it in an Equatorial swamp.
*I* travel with the cooking-pots and pails—
*I'm* sandwiched 'tween the coffee and the pork—
And when the dusty column checks and tails,
You should hear me spur the rearguard to a walk!

With my "*Pilly-willy-winky-winky popp!*"
[Oh, it's any tune that comes into my head!]
So I keep 'em moving forward till they drop;
So I play 'em up to water and to bed.

In the silence of the camp before the fight,
When it's good to make your will and say your prayer,
You can hear my *strumpty-tumpty* overnight,
Explaining ten to one was always fair.
I'm the Prophet of the Utterly Absurd,
Of the Patently Impossible and Vain—
And when the Thing that Couldn't has occurred,
Give me time to change my leg and go again.

With my "*Tumpa-tumpa-tumpa-tumpa-tump!*"
In the desert where the dung-fed camp-smoke curled.
There was never voice before us till I led our lonely chorus,
I—the war-drum of the White Man round the world!

By the bitter road the Younger Son must tread,
Ere he win to hearth and saddle of his own,—
'Mid the riot of the shearers at the shed,
In the silence of the herder's hut alone—
In the twilight, on a bucket upside down,
Hear me babble what the weakest won't confess—
I am Memory and Torment—I am Town!
I am all ever went with evening dress!

With my "*Tunka-tunka-tunka-tunka-tunk!*"
[So the lights—the London Lights—grow near and plain!]
So I rowel 'em afresh towards the Devil and the Flesh,
Till I bring my broken rankers home again.

In desire of many marvels over sea,
Where the new-raised tropic city sweats and roars,
I have sailed with Young Ulysses from the quay

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16. **arquebus and culverin,** early kinds of firearms. 23. **known . . . breezes.** Scientific charting of the prevailing winds of the world was begun in Germany early in the 19th century. 40. **reeking Banks,** fog banks that the train runs through. Cf. Kipling's *Captains Courageous.*

*The Song of the Banjo.* From *The Seven Seas,* copyright 1896 and 1905 by Rudyard Kipling.

1. **Broadwood,** an English piano.

7. **tails,** straggles. 12. **to water,** to water the horses, one of the last duties of the day. 35. **rowel 'em,** spur them. 36. **rankers,** soldiers in the ranks. 39. **Young Ulysses.** See Tennyson's *Ulysses,* page 43.

Till the anchor rumbled down on stranger shores.
He is blooded to the open and the sky,
He is taken in a snare that shall not fail,
He shall hear me singing strongly, till he die,
Like the shouting of a backstay in a gale.

With my *"Hya! Heeya! Heeya! Hullah! Haul!"*
[Oh the green that thunders aft along the deck!]
Are you sick o' towns and men? You must sign and sail again,
For it's "Johnny Bowlegs, pack your kit and trek!"

Through the gorge that gives the stars at noon-day clear —
Up the pass that packs the scud beneath our wheel —
Round the bluff that sinks her thousand fathom sheer —
Down the valley with our guttering brakes asqueal:
Where the trestle groans and quivers in the snow,
Where the many-shedded levels loop and twine,
Hear me lead my reckless children from below
Till we sing the Song of Roland to the pine!

With my *"Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!"*
[Oh the axe has cleared the mountain, croup and crest!]
And we ride the iron stallions down to drink,
Through the cañons to the waters of the West!

And the tunes that mean so much to you alone —
Common tunes that make you choke and blow your nose,
Vulgar tunes that bring the laugh that brings the groan —
I can rip your very heartstrings out with those;
With the feasting, and the folly, and the fun —
And the lying, and the lusting, and the drink,
And the merry play that drops you, when you're done,
To the thoughts that burn like irons if you think.

With my *"Plunka-lunka-lunka-lunka-lunk!"*
Here's a trifle on account of pleasure past,
Ere the wit that made you win gives you eyes to see your sin
And — the heavier repentance at the last!

Let the organ moan her sorrow to the roof —
I have told the naked stars the Grief of Man.
Let the trumpet snare the foeman to the proof —
I have known Defeat, and mocked it as we ran!
My bray ye may not alter nor mistake
When I stand to jeer the fatted Soul of Things,
But the Song of Lost Endeavour that I make,
Is it hidden in the twanging of the strings?

With my *"Ta-ra-rara-rara-ra-ra-rrrp!"*
[Is it naught to you that hear and pass me by?]
But the word — the word is mine, when the order moves the line
And the lean, locked ranks go roaring down to die!

The grandam of my grandam was the Lyre —
[O the blue below the little fisher-huts!]
That the Stealer stooping beachward filled with fire,
Till she bore my iron head and ringing guts!
By the wisdom of the centuries I speak —
To the tune of yestermorn I set the truth —
I, the joy of life unquestioned — I, the Greek —
I, the everlasting Wonder-song of Youth!

With my *"Tinka-tinka-tinka-tinka-tink!"*
[What d' ye lack, my noble masters? What d' ye lack?]
So I draw the world together link by link:
Yea, from Delos up to Limerick and back!

(1895)

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41. **blooded**, initiated. 44. **backstay**, a wire rope that holds the mast of a ship in place; in a high wind, its vibrations make a clear sound. 45. **Hya!** etc., cries used by sailors when hauling to insure that all will pull in unison. 48. **Johnny . . . trek**, a reference to the Cape-Dutch song, "Pack your kit and trek, Johnny with the limping leg." 50. **scud**, low, thin clouds flying before the wind. 54. **many-shedded levels**, levels covered with sheds to protect railways from snowdrifts and avalanches. 56. **Song of Roland**, the great French epic of the Middle Ages.

87. **the Stealer**, Hermes, the god of theft and protector of thieves; he invented the lyre, which he made out of a sea-shell. 94. **What d'ye lack**, formerly the traditional appeal of London peddlers and shopkeepers to passers-by. 96. **Delos up to Limerick**. Delos, an island off the coast of Greece, was the birthplace of Apollo, god of music. Limerick is a town in the province of Munster, Ireland, that gave its name to a nonsense poem of five lines. Kipling's phrase covers all times and every class of song from the divine music of Apollo to the modern limerick.

## THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE

*Now this is the Law of the Jungle — as old and as true as the sky;*
*And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the Wolf that shall break it must die.*

*As the creeper that girdles the tree-trunk the Law runneth forward and back —*
*For the strength of the Pack is the Wolf, and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack.*

Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply, but never too deep;
And remember the night is for hunting, and forget not the day is for sleep.

The Jackal may follow the Tiger, but, Cub, when thy whiskers are grown,
Remember the Wolf is a hunter — go forth and get food of thine own.

Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle — the Tiger, the Panther, the Bear;
And trouble not Hathi the Silent, and mock not the Boar in the lair.

When Pack meets with Pack in the Jungle, and neither will go from the trail,
Lie down till the leaders have spoken — it may be fair words shall prevail.

When ye fight with a Wolf of the Pack, ye must fight him alone and afar,
Lest others take part in the quarrel, and the Pack be diminished by war.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, and where he has made him his home,
Not even the Head Wolf may enter, not even the Council may come.

The Lair of the Wolf is his refuge, but where he has digged it too plain,
The Council shall send him a message, and so he shall change it again.

If ye kill before midnight, be silent, and wake not the woods with your bay,
Lest ye frighten the deer from the crops, and the brothers go empty away.

Ye may kill for yourselves, and your mates, and your cubs as they need, and ye can;
But kill not for pleasure of killing, and *seven times never kill Man!*

If ye plunder his Kill from a weaker, devour not all in thy pride;
Pack-Right is the right of the meanest; so leave him the head and the hide.

The Kill of the Pack is the meat of the Pack. Ye must eat where it lies;
And no one may carry away of that meat to his lair, or he dies.

The Kill of the Wolf is the meat of the Wolf. He may do what he will,
But, till he has given permission, the Pack may not eat of that Kill.

Cub-Right is the right of the Yearling. From all of his Pack he may claim
Full-gorge when the killer has eaten; and none may refuse him the same.

Lair-Right is the right of the Mother. From all of her year she may claim
One haunch of each kill for her litter; and none may deny her the same.

Cave-Right is the right of the Father — to hunt by himself for his own:
He is freed of all calls to the Pack; he is judged by the Council alone.

Because of his age and his cunning, because of his gripe and his paw,
In all that the Law leaveth open, the word of the Head Wolf is Law.

*Now these are the Laws of the Jungle, and many and mighty are they;*
*But the head and the hoof of the Law and the haunch and the hump is — Obey!*

(1895)

## SESTINA OF THE TRAMP-ROYAL

Speakin' in general, I 'ave tried 'em all —
The 'appy roads that take you o'er the world.
Speakin' in general, I 'ave found them good
For such as cannot use one bed too long,
But must get 'ence, the same as I 'ave done,
An' go observin' matters till they die.

What do it matter where or 'ow we die,
So long as we've our 'ealth to watch it all —

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*The Law of the Jungle.* From *The Second Jungle Book,* copyright 1895 by Rudyard Kipling.
10. **Hathi the Silent,** the elephant.

*Sestina of the Tramp-Royal.* From *The Seven Seas,* copyright 1896 and 1905 by Rudyard Kipling.
A sestina is a poem of six stanzas of six lines each with a closing envoy. The line-endings of the first stanza recur in the other stanzas but in different order. The form was first used by the troubadours, a class of lyric poets who flourished in southeastern France from the 11th to the 13th centuries.

The different ways that different things are done,
An' men an' women lovin' in this world;
Takin' our chances as they come along,
An' when they ain't, pretendin' they are good?

In cash or credit — no, it aren't no good;
You 'ave to 'ave the 'abit or you'd die,
Unless you lived your life but one day long,
Nor didn't prophesy nor fret at all,
But drew your tucker some'ow from the world,
An' never bothered what you might ha' done.

But, Gawd, what things are they I 'aven't done!
I've turned my 'and to most, an' turned it good,
In various situations round the world —
For 'im that doth not work must surely die;
But that's no reason man should labour all
'Is life on one same shift — life's none so long.

Therefore, from job to job I've moved along.
Pay couldn't 'old me when my time was done,
For something in my 'ead upset it all,
Till I 'ad dropped whatever 't was for good,
An', out at sea, be'eld the dock-lights die,
An' met my mate — the wind that tramps the world!

It's like a book, I think, this bloomin' world,
Which you can read and care for just so long,
But presently you feel that you will die
Unless you get the page you're readin' done,
An' turn another — likely not so good;
But what you're after is to turn 'em all.

Gawd bless this world! Whatever she 'ath done —
Excep' when awful long — I've found it good.
So write, before I die, " 'E liked it all!"
(1896)

## RECESSIONAL

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies;
The Captains and the Kings depart:
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not Thee in awe,
Such boastings as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law —
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget — lest we forget!

For heathen heart that puts her trust
In reeking tube and iron shard,
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
And guarding, calls not Thee to guard,
For frantic boast and foolish word —
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!
(1897)

## THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN

Take up the White Man's burden —
Send forth the best ye breed —
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild —
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
Half-devil and half-child.

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22. **work . . . die.** See *2 Thessalonians*, 3:10.—"If any would not work, neither should he eat."

*Recessional.* From *The Five Nations*, copyright 1903 by Rudyard Kipling.

A recessional is a hymn sung while the clergy and the choir leave the church in procession at the close of a service. Kipling's poem was written as the celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (the end of her sixtieth year as queen) was drawing to a close. The poem served as an appropriate warning at a time when the British people were dazzled by the pomp and power of empire. Cf. Newbolt's *The Vigil,* page 926, and the first lyric of Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, page 906.

4. **palm and pine,** a reference to the wide extent of the Empire. 6. **Lest we forget.** See *Deuteronomy*, 6:12.—"Then beware lest thou forget the Lord." 8. **Captains . . . depart.** Cf. Watson's *Lachrymæ Musarum*, 107-08, page 903. 9-10. **sacrifice . . . heart.** See *Psalms*, 51:17.—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." 16. **Nineveh and Tyre.** Nineveh was the famous capital of ancient Assyria; it is now buried under sand. Tyre, in Phœnicia, once a great maritime city, is now an unimportant cotton-shipping port. 21-22. **Gentiles . . . Law.** See *Romans*, 2:14.—"For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." In Kipling's mind a Gentile may be anyone not English. 26. **shard,** shell-fragment.

*The White Man's Burden.* Copyright 1899 by Rudyard Kipling.

This phrase was used at the close of the Spanish-American War, 1898, to describe the responsibility of the United States in caring for Cuba and the Philippines; it thus became the watchword of imperialism.

Take up the White Man's burden —
In patience to abide,
To veil the threat of terror
And check the show of pride;
By open speech and simple,
An hundred times made plain,
To seek another's profit,
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden —
The savage wars of peace —
Fill full the mouth of Famine
And bid the sickness cease;
And when your goal is nearest
The end for others sought,
Watch Sloth and heathen Folly
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden —
No tawdry rule of kings,
But toil of serf and sweeper —
The tale of common things.
The ports ye shall not enter,
The roads ye shall not tread,
Go make them with your living,
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden —
And reap his old reward:
The blame of those ye better,
The hate of those ye guard —
The cry of hosts ye humour
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light: —
"Why brought ye us from bondage,
"Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden —
Ye dare not stoop to less —
Nor call too loud on Freedom
To cloak your weariness;
By all ye cry or whisper,
By all ye leave or do,
The silent, sullen peoples
Shall weigh your Gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden —
Have done with childish days —
The lightly proffered laurel,
The easy, ungrudged praise.
Comes now, to search your manhood
Through all the thankless years,
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of your peers!

(1899)

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**39-40. Why . . . night.** When the Israelites were hungry in the wilderness, on their journey from Egypt, they murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying: "Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, where we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full" (*Exodus*, 16:2-3).

## BOOTS

(*Infantry Columns*)

We're foot — slog — slog — slog — sloggin' over Africa!
Foot — foot — foot — foot — sloggin' over Africa —
(Boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up and down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Seven — six — eleven — five — nine-an'-twenty mile to-day —
Four — eleven — seventeen — thirty-two the day before —
(Boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up and down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Don't — don't — don't — don't — look at what's in front of you.
(Boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up an' down again);
Men — men — men — men — men go mad with watchin' 'em,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

Try — try — try — try — to think o' something different —
Oh — my — God — keep — me from goin' lunatic!
(Boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up an' down again!)
There's no discharge in the war!

Count — count — count — count — the bullets in the bandoliers.
If — your — eyes — drop — they will get atop o' you!
(Boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up an' down again) —
There's no discharge in the war!

We — can — stick — out — 'unger, thirst, an' weariness,
But — not — not — not — not the chronic sight of 'em —
Boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up an' down again,
An' there's no discharge in the war!

'Tain't — so — bad — by — day because o' company,

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*Boots.* From *The Five Nations*, copyright 1903 by Rudyard Kipling.

The rhythm is that of marching troops. The poem refers particularly to the Boer War, 1899-1902.

**4. There's . . . war.** See *Ecclesiastes*, 8:8.—"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war." **17. bandoliers,** cartridge-belts worn over the shoulder.

But night — brings — long — strings — o' forty thousand million
Boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up an' down again.
There's no discharge in the war!

I — 'ave — marched — six — weeks in 'Ell an' certify
It — is — not — fire — devils, dark or anything,
But boots — boots — boots — boots — movin' up an' down again,
An' there's no discharge in the war! (1903)

## THE EXPLORER

"There's no sense in going further — it's the edge of cultivation,"
So they said, and I believed it — broke my land and sowed my crop —
Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station
Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and stop.

Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated — so:
"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges —
Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!"

So I went, worn out of patience; never told my nearest neighbours —
Stole away with pack and ponies — left 'em drinking in the town;
And the faith that moveth mountains didn't seem to help my labours
As I faced the sheer main-ranges, whipping up and leading down.

March by march I puzzled through 'em, turning flanks and dodging shoulders,
Hurried on in hope of water, headed back for lack of grass;
Till I camped above the tree-line — drifted snow and naked boulders —
Felt free air astir to windward — knew I'd stumbled on the Pass.

Thought to name it for the finder: but that night the Norther found me —
Froze and killed the plains-bred ponies; so I called the camp Despair
(It's the Railway Gap to-day, though). Then my Whisper waked to hound me: —
"Something lost behind the Ranges. Over yonder! Go you there!"

Then I knew, the while I doubted — knew His Hand was certain o'er me.
Still — it might be self-delusion — scores of better men had died —
I could reach the township living, but . . . He knows what terrors tore me . . .
But I didn't . . . but I didn't. I went down the other side,

Till the snow ran out in flowers, and the flowers turned to aloes,
And the aloes sprung to thickets and a brimming stream ran by;
But the thickets dwined to thorn-scrub, and the water drained to shallows,
And I dropped again on desert — blasted earth, and blasting sky. . . .

I remember lighting fires; I remember sitting by 'em;
I remember seeing faces, hearing voices, through the smoke;
I remember they were fancy — for I threw a stone to try 'em.
"Something lost behind the Ranges" was the only word they spoke.

I remember going crazy. I remember that I knew it
When I heard myself hallooing to the funny folk I saw.
'Very full of dreams that desert, but my two legs took me through it . . .
And I used to watch 'em moving with the toes all black and raw.

But at last the country altered — White Man's country past disputing —
Rolling grass and open timber, with a hint of hills behind —
There I found me food and water, and I lay a week recruiting.
Got my strength and lost my nightmares. Then I entered on my find.

Thence I ran my first rough survey — chose my trees and blazed and ringed 'em —
Week by week I pried and sampled — week by week my findings grew.
Saul he went to look for donkeys, and by God he found a kingdom!
But by God, who sent His Whisper, I had struck the worth of two!

---

*The Explorer.* From *The Five Nations*, copyright 1903 by Rudyard Kipling. Cf. Symons's *The Wanderers*, page 874.
12. **whipping . . . down.** Uphill the explorer walks behind his pack-horse; downhill he walks before him. 17. **Norther,** a strong cold wind from the north.

25. **aloes,** plants with flowers on long spikes. 27. **dwined,** dwindled. 43. **Saul . . . kingdom.** When Saul was looking for lost donkeys, the Jews, impressed by his height and strength, chose him as their king (*1 Samuel*, 9:3-37; 10:1-24.)

Up along the hostile mountains, where the hair-poised snow-slide shivers —
  Down and through the big fat marshes that the virgin ore-bed stains,
Till I heard the mile-wide mutterings of unimagined rivers,
  And beyond the nameless timber saw illimitable plains!

'Plotted sites of future cities, traced the easy grades between 'em;
  Watched unharnessed rapids wasting fifty thousand head an hour;
Counted leagues of water-frontage through the axe-ripe woods that screen 'em —
  Saw the plant to feed a people — up and waiting for the power!

Well I know who'll take the credit — all the clever chaps that followed —
  Came, a dozen men together — never knew my desert fears;
Tracked me by the camps I'd quitted, used the water-holes I'd hollowed.
  They'll go back and do the talking. *They'll* be called the Pioneers!

They will find my sites of townships — not the cities that I set there.
  They will rediscover rivers — not my rivers heard at night.
By my own old marks and bearings they will show me how to get there,
  By the lonely cairns I builded they will guide my feet aright.

Have I named one single river? Have I claimed one single acre?
  Have I kept one single nugget — (barring samples)? No, not I!
Because my price was paid me ten times over by my Maker.
  But you wouldn't understand it. You go up and occupy.

Ores you'll find there; wood and cattle; water-transit sure and steady
  (That should keep the railway rates down), coal and iron at your doors.
God took care to hide that country till He judged His people ready,
  Then He chose me for His Whisper, and I've found it, and it's yours!

Yes, your "Never-never country" — yes, your "edge of cultivation"
  And "no sense in going further" — till I crossed the range to see.
God forgive me! No, *I* didn't. It's God's present to our nation.
  Anybody might have found it but — His Whisper came to Me!

(1903)

## IF —

If you can keep your head when all about you
  Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
  But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
  Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
  And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
  If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
  And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
  Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
  And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
  And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
  And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
  To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
  Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
  Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
  If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
  With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
  And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

(1910)

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50. **head,** a unit of water-power. 69. **"Never-never country,"** a term applied to the little-known districts in central and northern Australia, from which early explorers never came back.

*If—.* Copyright 1910 by Rudyard Kipling.

## WILLIAM WATSON (1858-1935)

### WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE

I

The old rude church, with bare, bald tower, is here;
Beneath its shadow high-born Rotha flows;
Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near,
And with cool murmur lulling his repose.

Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near.
His hills, his lakes, his streams are with him yet.
Surely the heart that read her own heart clear
Nature forgets not soon; 'tis we forget.

We that with vagrant soul his fixity
Have slighted; faithless, done his deep faith wrong;
Left him for poorer loves, and bowed the knee
To misbegotten strange new gods of song.

Yet, led by hollow ghost or beckoning elf
Far from her homestead to the desert bourn,
The vagrant soul returning to herself
Wearily wise, must needs to him return.

To him and to the powers that with him dwell —
Inflowings that divulged not whence they came;
And that secluded Spirit unknowable,
The mystery we make darker with a name;

The Somewhat which we name but cannot know,
Ev'n as we name a star and only see
His quenchless flashings forth, which ever show
And ever hide him, and which are not he.

2

Poet who sleepest by this wandering wave!
When thou wast born, what birth-gift hadst thou then?
To thee what wealth was that the Immortals gave,
The wealth thou gavest in thy turn to men?

Not Milton's keen, translunar music thine;
Not Shakespeare's cloudless, boundless human view;
Not Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine;
Nor yet the wizard twilight Coleridge knew.

What hadst thou that could make so large amends
For all thou hadst not and thy peers possessed,
Motion and fire, swift means to radiant ends? —
Thou hadst, for weary feet, the gift of rest.

From Shelley's dazzling glow or thunderous haze,
From Byron's tempest-anger, tempest-mirth,
Men turned to thee and found — not blast and blaze,
Tumult of tottering heavens, but peace on earth.

Nor peace that grows by Lethe, scentless flower,
There in white languors to decline and cease;
But peace whose names are also rapture, power,
Clear sight, and love: for these are parts of peace.

3

I hear it vouched the Muse is with us still —
If less divinely frenzied than of yore,
In lieu of feeling she has wondrous skill
To simulate emotion felt no more.

Not such the authentic Presence pure, that made
This valley vocal in the great days gone! —
In *his* great days, while yet the spring-time played
About him, and the mighty morning shone.

No word-mosaic artificer, he sang
A lofty song of lowly weal and dole.
Right from the heart, right to the heart it sprang,
Or from the soul leapt instant to the soul.

He felt the charm of childhood, grace of youth,
Grandeur of age, insisting to be sung.
The impassioned argument was simple truth
Half-wondering at its own melodious tongue.

Impassioned? ay, to the song's ecstatic core!
But far removed were clangor, storm, and feud;
For plenteous health was his, exceeding store
Of joy, and an impassioned quietude.

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*Wordsworth's Grave.* Wordsworth is buried in the churchyard of St. Oswald's, a 13th century church, at Grasmere in the Lake Country of England, where he lived for fourteen years; the Rotha, a small stream with its source in the mountains, flows near the grave. See Arnold's *Memorial Verses*, page 433.

41. **peace . . . flower.** The waters of Lethe, a river in the underworld, gave to those who drank, forgetfulness of past sorrows. The flowers of the Greek underworld had no scent.

4

A hundred years ere he to manhood came,
Song from celestial heights had wandered down,
Put off her robe of sunlight, dew, and flame,
And donned a modish dress to charm the Town.

Thenceforth she but festooned the porch of things;
Apt at life's lore, incurious what life meant.
Dextrous of hand, she struck her lute's few strings;
Ignobly perfect, barrenly content.

Unflushed with ardor and unblanched with awe,
Her lips in profitless derision curled,
She saw with dull emotion — if she saw —
The vision of the glory of the world.

The human masque she watched, with dreamless eyes
In whose clear shallows lurked no trembling shade:
The stars, unkenned by her, might set and rise,
Unmarked by her, the daisies bloom and fade.

The age grew sated with her sterile wit.
Herself waxed weary on her loveless throne.
Men felt life's tide, the sweep and surge of it,
And craved a living voice, a natural tone.

For none the less, though song was but half true,
The world lay common, one abounding theme.
Man joyed and wept, and fate was ever new,
And love was sweet, life real, death no dream.

In sad, stern verse the rugged scholar-sage
Bemoaned his toil unvalued, youth uncheered.
His numbers wore the vesture of the age,
But, 'neath it beating, the great heart was heard.

From dewy pastures, uplands sweet with thyme,
A virgin breeze freshened the jaded day.
It wafted Collins' lonely vesper-chime,
It breathed abroad the frugal note of Gray.

It fluttered here and there, nor swept in vain
The dusty haunts where futile echoes dwell —
Then, in a cadence soft as summer rain,
And sad from Auburn voiceless, drooped and fell.

It drooped and fell, and one 'neath northern skies,
With southern heart, who tilled his father's field,
Found Poesy a-dying, bade her rise
And touch quick Nature's hem and go forth healed.

On life's broad plain the plowman's conquering share
Upturned the fallow lands of truth anew,
And o'er the formal garden's trim parterre
The peasant's team a ruthless furrow drew.

Bright was his going forth, but clouds ere long
Whelmed him; in gloom his radiance set, and those
Twin morning stars of the new century's song,
Those morning stars that sang together, rose.

In elvish speech the *Dreamer* told his tale
Of marvelous oceans swept by fateful wings. —
The *Seër* strayed not from earth's human pale,
But the mysterious face of common things

He mirrored as the moon in Rydal Mere
Is mirrored, when the breathless night hangs blue:
Strangely remote she seems and wondrous near,
And by some nameless difference born anew.

---

65-84. **A hundred . . . tone.** The period described is the 18th century, the neo-classic era of English literature, when poetry shared with prose the qualities of urbanity, clarity, correctness, poise, and wit, as illustrated by the verse of Pope and Prior. 89. **rugged scholar-sage,** Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84), whose *London* contains the couplet:

> "This mournful truth is every where confessed,
> Slow rises worth, by poverty depressed."

Johnson had his own struggles in mind.

95. **Collins,** William Collins (1721-59), whose *Ode to Evening* is a sensitive record of twilight impressions. 96. **Gray,** Thomas Gray (1716-71), who wrote, with infinite care, only a few poems, including *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard.* 100. **sad from Auburn,** a reference to Oliver Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* (1770), which describes the depopulation of "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain . . ." 101-02. **one . . . field,** Robert Burns (1759-96), Scottish plowman-poet, whose songs achieve his desire that his "Muse, though hamely in attire, May touch the heart." 107. **parterre,** flower-beds arranged in geometric patterns. 111. **Twin . . . stars,** Wordsworth and Coleridge, whose *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) is taken as the beginning of the Romantic Movement in English literature; in writing the poems that comprise this volume, Coleridge ("the Dreamer") was to make the supernatural appear real, whereas Wordsworth ("the Seër") was to make the real appear supernatural by showing common things in an uncommon light. 113. **tale,** *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* which Coleridge contributed to the *Lyrical Ballads.*

5

Peace — peace — and rest! Ah, how the lyre is loath,
Or powerless now, to give what all men seek!
Either it deadens with ignoble sloth
Or deafens with shrill tumult, loudly weak.

Where is the singer whose large notes and clear
Can heal, and arm, and plenish, and sustain?
Lo, one with empty music floods the ear,
And one, the heart refreshing, tires the brain.

And idly tuneful, the loquacious throng
Flutter and twitter, prodigal of time,
And little masters make a toy of song
Till grave men weary of the sound of rime.

And some go prankt in faded antique dress,
Abhorring to be hale and glad and free;
And some parade a conscious naturalness —
The scholar's, not the child's, simplicity.

Enough; — and wisest who from words forbear.
The gentle river rails not as it glides;
And suave and charitable, the winsome air
Chides not at all, or only him who chides.

6

Nature! we storm thine ear with choric notes.
Thou answerest through the calm great nights and days,
"Laud me who will: not tuneless are your throats;
Yet if ye paused I should not miss the praise."

We falter, half-rebuked, and sing again.
We chant thy desertness and haggard gloom,
Or with thy splendid wrath inflate the strain,
Or touch it with thy color and perfume.

One, his melodious blood aflame for thee,
Wooed with fierce lust, his hot heart world-defiled.
One, with the upward eye of infancy,
Looked in thy face, and felt himself thy child.

Thee he approached without distrust or dread —
Beheld thee throned, an awful queen, above —
Climbed to thy lap and merely laid his head
Against thy warm wild heart of mother-love.

He heard that vast heart beating — thou didst press
Thy child so close, and lov'dst him unaware.
Thy beauty gladdened him; yet he scarce less
Had loved thee, had he never found thee fair!

For thou wast not as legendary lands
To which with curious eyes and ears we roam.
Nor wast thou as a fane 'mid solemn sands,
Where palmers halt at evening. Thou wast home.

And here, at home, still bides he; but he sleeps;
Not to be wakened even at thy word;
Though we, vague dreamers, dream he somewhere keeps
An ear still open to thy voice still heard —

Thy voice, as heretofore, about him blown,
Forever blown about his silence now;
Thy voice, though deeper, yet so like his own
That almost, when he sang, we deemed 'twas thou!

7

Behind Helm Crag and Silver Howe the sheen
Of the retreating day is less and less.
Soon will the lordlier summits, here unseen,
Gather the night about their nakedness.

The half-heard bleat of sheep comes from the hill.
Faint sounds of childish play are in the air.
The river murmurs past. All else is still.
The very graves seem stiller than they were.

Afar though nation be on nation hurled,
And life with toil and ancient pain depressed,
Here one may scarce believe the whole wide world
Is not at peace, and all man's heart at rest.

Rest! 'twas the gift *he* gave; and peace! the shade
*He* spread, for spirits fevered with the sun.

---

121-22. **lyre . . . seek.** Cf. Gosse's *Impression*, page 800, and Dobson's *On the Future of Poetry*, page 769. 141. **choric notes**, formal verses, like those of an ode. 149. **One**, Byron. 151. **One**, Wordsworth.

164. **palmers**, pilgrims to the Holy Land. 173. **Helm Crag . . . Silver Howe**, mountains near Grasmere.

To him his bounties are come back — here laid
In rest, in peace, his labor nobly done.
(*1884-1887;* 1887)

## WORLD-STRANGENESS

Strange the world about me lies,
Never yet familiar grown —
Still disturbs me with surprise,
Haunts me like a face half known.

In this house with starry dome,
Floored with gemlike plains and seas,
Shall I never feel at home,
Never wholly be at ease?

On from room to room I stray,
Yet my Host can ne'er espy,
And I know not to this day
Whether guest or captive I.

So, betwixt the starry dome
And the floor of plains and seas,
I have never felt at home,
Never wholly been at ease. (1889)

## SHELLEY'S CENTENARY

Within a narrow span of time,
Three princes of the realm of rime,
At height of youth or manhood's prime
From earth took wing,
To join the fellowship sublime
Who, dead, yet sing.

He, first, his earliest wreath who wove
Of laurel grown in Latmian grove,
Conquered by pain and hapless love
Found calmer home,
Roofed by the heaven that glows above
Eternal Rome.

A fierier soul, its own fierce prey
And cumbered with more mortal clay,
At Missolonghi flamed away,
And left the air
Reverberating to this day
Its loud despair.

Alike remote from Byron's scorn
And Keat's magic as of morn
Bursting forever newly-born
On forests old,
To wake a hoary world forlorn
With touch of gold,

Shelley, the cloud-begot, who grew
Nourished on starbeams, air, and dew,
Into that Essence whence he drew
His life and lyre
Was fittingly resolved anew
Through wave and fire.

And it was strangely, wildly meet,
That he, who brooked not Time's slow feet,
With passage thus abrupt and fleet
Should hurry hence,
Eager the Great Perhaps to greet
With Why? and Whence?

Impatient of the world's fixed way,
He ne'er could suffer God's delay,
But all the future in a day
Would build divine,
And the whole past in ruins lay,
An emptied shrine.

Vain vision! but the glow, the fire,
The passion of benign desire,
These peradventure lift him higher
Than many a soul
That mounts a million paces nigher
Its meaner goal.

And power is his, if naught besides,
In that thin ether where he rides,
Above the roar of human tides
To ascend afar,
Lost in a storm of light that hides
His dizzy car.

Below, the unhasting world toils on,
And here and there are victories won,
Some dragon slain, some justice done,
While, 'mid the skies,
A meteor rushing on the sun,
He flares and dies.

But, as he cleaves yon ether clear,
Notes from the unattempted sphere
He scatters to the far-off ear
Of Earth's dim throng,
Nay, from the zenith he flings sheer
His torrent of song.

In other shapes than he forecast,
Fate molds the Morrow. His fierce blast —
His wild assault upon the Past —

---

*Shelley's Centenary.* Shelley was born in 1792. See Hardy's *Shelley's Skylark*, page 928.

7-12. **earliest . . . Rome.** Keats, whose first important poem, *Endymion* (1818), concerns a youth who kept sheep on Mount Latmus, had an unfortunate love affair with Fanny Brawn, and died of tuberculosis in Rome, 1821. 13. **fierier soul,** Lord Byron, whose "loud despair" is recorded in the last two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and who died, 1824, of a fever at Missolonghi, Greece, while he was fighting for Greek independence from Turkey.

29-30. **resolved . . . fire.** Shelley was drowned, July 8, 1822, while sailing in the Bay of Lerici, Italy; when his body was found, it was cremated on the shore.

These things are vain.
Brief is Revolt, but born to last
Was the arrowy strain,

That seems the wandering voices blent
Of every virgin element;
A sound from azure spaces sent —
An airy call
From the Uranian firmament
O'erdoming all.

And in this world of wordlings, where
Souls rush in apathy, and ne'er
A great emotion shakes the air,
And life flags tame,
And rare is noble impulse, rare
The impassioned aim,

'Tis no mean fortune to have heard
A singer who, if errors blurred
His sight, had yet a spirit stirred
By vast desire,
And ardor fledging the swift word
With plumes of fire.

A creature of impetuous breath,
Our torpor deadlier than death
He knew not; whatsoe'er he saith
Flashes with life;
He spurreth men, he quickeneth
To splendid strife.

And in his gusts of song he brings
Wild odors shaken from strange wings,
And carries secret whisperings
From far lips blown,
While all the rapturous heart of things
Throbs through his own —

His own that from the burning pyre
One who had loved his wind-swept lyre
Out of the sharp teeth of the fire
Unmolten drew,
Beside the sea that in her ire
Smote him and slew. (*1892;* 1892)

## ENGLAND MY MOTHER

I

England my mother,
Wardress of waters,
Builder of peoples,
Maker of men —

Hast thou yet leisure
Left for the muses?
Heed'st thou the songsmith
Forging the rime?

Deafened with tumults,
How canst thou hearken?
Strident is faction,
Demos is loud.

Lazarus, hungry,
Menaces Dives;
Labor the giant
Chafes in his hold.

Yet do the songsmiths
Quit not their forges;
Still on life's anvil
Forge they the rime.

Still the rapt faces
Glow from the furnace:
Breath of the smithy
Scorches their brows.

Yea, and thou hear'st them?
So shall the hammers
Fashion not vainly
Verses of gold.

2

Lo, with the ancient
Roots of man's nature,
Twines the eternal
Passion of song.

Ever Love fans it,
Ever Life feeds it;
Time cannot age it,
Death cannot slay.

Deep in the world-heart
Stand its foundations,
Tangled with all things,
Twin-made with all.

Nay, what is Nature's
Self, but an endless
Strife toward music,
Euphony, rime?

Trees in their blooming,
Tides in their flowing,
Stars in their circling,
Tremble with song.

God on His throne is
Eldest of poets;

---

77. **Uranian,** heavenly. 103-06. **from . . . drew.** When Shelley's body was being cremated Edward John Trelawny, a friend, snatched the heart unburned from the flames.

*England My Mother.* This poem is an excellent example of the unrimed lyric; cf. Tennyson's *Tears, Idle Tears,* page 55. Compare the thought of the poem with that of Henley's *England, My England,* page 795.

12. **Demos,** the crowd. 13-14. **Lazarus . . . Dives,** the beggar and the rich man in Christ's parable (*Luke,* 16:19 ff.).

Unto His measures
Moveth the Whole.

3

Therefore deride not
Speech of the muses,
England my mother,
Maker of men.

Nations are mortal,
Fragile is greatness;
Fortune may fly thee,
Song shall not fly.

Song the all-girdling,
Song cannot perish;
Men shall make music,
Man shall give ear.

Not while the choric
Chant of creation
Floweth from all things,
Poured without pause,

Cease we to echo
Faintly the descant
Whereto forever
Dances the world.

4

So let the songsmith
Proffer his rime-gift,
England my mother,
Maker of men.

Gray grows thy count'nance,
Full of the ages;
Time on thy forehead
Sits like a dream:

Song is the potion
All things renewing,
Youth's one elixir,
Fountain of morn.

Thou, at the world-loom
Weaving thy future,
Fitly may'st temper
Toil with delight.

Deemest thou, only
Labor is earnest?
Grave is all beauty,
Sacred all joy.

Song is no bauble—
Slight not the songsmith,
England my mother,
Maker of men. (*1892;* 1892)

## LACHRYMÆ MUSARUM

Low, like another's, lies the laureled head;
The life that seemed a perfect song is o'er—
Carry the last great bard to his last bed.
Land that he loved, thy noblest voice is mute.
Land that he loved, that loved him! nevermore
Meadow of thine, smooth lawn or wild sea-shore,
Gardens of odorous bloom and tremulous fruit,
Or woodlands old, like Druid couches spread,
The master's feet shall tread.
Death's little rift hath rent the faultless lute;
The singer of undying songs is dead.

Lo, in this season pensive-hued and grave,
While fades and falls the doomed, reluctant leaf
From withered Earth's fantastic coronal,
With wandering sighs of forest and of wave
Mingles the murmur of a people's grief
For him whose leaf shall fade not, neither fall.
He hath fared forth, beyond these suns and showers.
For us, the autumn glow, the autumn flame,
And soon the winter silence shall be ours;
Him the eternal spring of fadeless fame
Crowns with no mortal flowers.

What needs his laurel our ephemeral tears,
To save from visitation of decay?
Not in this temporal light alone, that bay
Blooms, nor to perishable mundane ears
Sings he with lips of transitory clay.
Rapt though he be from us,
Virgil salutes him, and Theocritus;
Catullus, mightiest-brained Lucretius, each
Greets him, their brother, on the Stygian beach;
Proudly a gaunt right hand doth Dante reach;
Milton and Wordsworth bid him welcome home;
Keats, on his lips the eternal rose of youth,

---

65-66. **choric . . . creation.** The ordered rhythm of the universe is thought of as the harmonious anthem of a great choir; see *Job*, 38:6-7.—"Who laid the corner stone thereof when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" 70. **descant,** song.

*Lachrymæ Musarum.* The title means *Tears of the Muses*—shed for Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who had recently died. 1. **laureled head.** Tennyson was poet laureate of England from 1850 until his death in 1892. 8. **Druid couches.** The Druids, the priests of the ancient Celtic inhabitants of Gaul and Britain, lived and worshiped in oak groves. 25. **bay,** laurel. 28. **Rapt,** taken away. 29. **Virgil,** Roman poet (70-19 B.C.), author of the *Æneid.* **Theocritus,** 3rd century pastoral poet of Sicily. 30. **Catullus,** Roman lyric poet (87-54 B.C.). **Lucretius,** Roman poet and Epicurean philosopher (96?-55 B.C.). 31. **Stygian beach,** the shore of the river Styx across which the dead pass to the Greek underworld.

Doth in the name of Beauty that is Truth
A kinsman's love beseech;
Coleridge, his locks aspersed with fairy foam,
Calm Spenser, Chaucer suave,
His equal friendship crave;
And godlike spirits hail him guest, in speech
Of Athens, Florence, Weimar, Stratford, Rome.

Nay, he returns to regions whence he came.
Him doth the spirit divine
Of universal loveliness reclaim.
All nature is his shrine.
Seek him henceforward in the wind and sea,
In earth's and air's emotion or repose,
In every star's august serenity,
And in the rapture of the flaming rose.
There seek him if ye would not seek in vain,
There, in the rhythm and music of the Whole;
Yea, and forever in the human soul
Made stronger and more beauteous by his strain.

For lo! creation's self is one great choir,
And what is nature's order but the rime
Whereto in holiest chime
All things have moved with all things from their prime?
Who shall expound the mystery of the lyre?
In far retreats of elemental mind
Obscurely comes and goes
The imperative breath of song, that as the wind
Is trackless, and oblivious whence it blows.
Demand of lilies wherefore they are white,
Extort her crimson secret from the rose,
But ask not of the Muse that she disclose
The meaning of the riddle of her might;
Somewhat of all things sealed and recondite,
Save the enigma of herself, she knows.
The master could not tell, with all his lore,
Wherefore he sang, or whence the mandate sped;
Ev'n as the linnet sings, so I, he said—
Ah, rather as the imperial nightingale,
That held in trance the ancient Attic shore,
And charms the ages with the notes that o'er
All woodland chants immortally prevail!
And now, from our vain plaudits greatly fled,
He with diviner silence dwells instead,
And on no earthly sea with transient roar,
Unto no earthly airs, he sets his sail,
But far beyond our vision and our hail
Is heard forever and is seen no more.

No more, O never now,
Lord of the lofty and the tranquil brow
Shall men behold those wizard locks where Time
Let fall no wintry rime.
Once, in his youth obscure,
The weaver of this verse, that shall endure
By splendor of its theme which cannot die,
Beheld thee eye to eye,
And touched through thee the hand
Of every hero of thy race divine,
Ev'n to the sire of all the laureled line,
The sightless wanderer on the Ionian strand.
Yea, I beheld thee, and behold thee yet;
Thou hast forgotten, but can I forget?
Are not thy words all goldenly impressed
On memory's palimpsest?
I hear the utterance of thy sovereign tongue,
I tread the floor thy hallowing feet have trod;
I see the hands a nation's lyre that strung,
The eyes that looked through life and gazed on God.

The seasons change, the winds they shift and veer;
The grass of yesteryear
Is dead; the birds depart, the groves decay;
Empires dissolve and peoples disappear;
Song passes not away.
Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
And kings a dubious legend of their reign;
The swords of Cæsars, they are less than rust;
The poet doth remain.
Dead is Augustus, Maro is alive;
And thou, the Mantuan of this age and soil,
With Virgil shalt survive,
Enriching Time with no less honeyed spoil,

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35. **Beauty . . . Truth.** See Keats's *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, lines 49-50:

> "'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

37. **aspersed,** sprinkled. **fairy foam,** a reference to the supernatural seas in which Coleridge's ancient mariner sailed, with perhaps a reminiscence of lines 69-70 in Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*:

> ". . . magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

41. **Athens . . . Rome,** cities associated with great poets: Athens with such as Sophocles and Euripides; Florence with Dante; Weimar with Goethe and Schiller; Stratford with Shakespeare; and Rome with Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. 54. **creation's . . . choir.** See note on *England My Mother*, 65-66, page 902. 71. **Ev'n . . . I.** See *In Memoriam*, Section 21, 23-24, page 62:

> "I do but sing because I must,
> And pipe but as the linnets sing."

72. **nightingale.** See Arnold's *Philomela*, page 470, and Swinburne's *Itylus*, page 675.

84-85. **locks . . . rime.** Tennyson's hair never turned gray. The version of the poem sent to Tennyson by Watson in 1892 contained the phrase "wintry hair." Tennyson wrote to Watson: "If by 'wintry hair' you allude to a tree whose leaves are half gone, you are right; but if you mean 'white' you are wrong, for I never had a gray hair on my head." (*Memoir*, II, page 398.) 92-93. **sire . . . strand.** Homer, who tradition says was blind and a wandering minstrel in the Ionian cities along the coast of Asia Minor. 97. **palimpsest,** a parchment from which earlier writing has been erased to make room for new. 107-08. **Captains . . . reign.** Cf. Kipling's *Recessional*, 7-8, page 893. 111-13. **Dead . . . survive.** Publius Virgilius Maro, called Virgil, was a native of Mantua in Italy; his fame is said to have outlived that of Augustus Cæsar, emperor of Rome during Virgil's literary career. See Dobson's *Ars Victrix*, page 763. A Virgilian quality has been felt in Tennyson's poetry. See F. W. Myers's letter to Hallam Tennyson (*Memoir*, II, 483), in which reference is made to lines 13-14 of Tennyson's *To Virgil* (page 155) as the "most Virgilian of all."

The yielding sweet of every Muse's hive;
Heeding no more the sound if idle praise
In that great calm our tumults cannot reach,
Master who crown'st our immelodious days
With flower of perfect speech. (*1892;* 1892)

## THE SOVEREIGN POET

He sits above the clang and dust of Time,
With the world's secret trembling on his lip.
He asks not converse or companionship
In the cold starlight where thou canst not climb.

The undelivered tidings in his breast
Suffer him not to rest.
He sees afar the immemorable throng,
And binds the scattered ages with a song.

The glorious riddle of his rhythmic breath,
His might, his spell, we know not what they be;
We only feel, whate'er he uttereth,
This savors not of death,
This hath a relish of eternity. (*1894;* 1905)

## THE WORLD IN ARMOR

### 1

Under this shade of crimson wings abhorred
That never wholly leaves the sky serene,
While Vengeance sleeps a sleep so light, between
Dominions that acclaim Thee overlord —
Sadly the blast of Thy tremendous word,
Whate'er its mystic purport may have been,
Echoes across the ages, Nazarene:
*Not to bring peace Mine errand, but a sword.*
For lo, Thy world uprises and lies down
In armor, and its Peace is War, in all
Save the great death that weaves War's dreadful crown;
War unennobled by heroic pain,
War without triumph, without glorious fall;
War that sits smiling, with the eyes of Cain.

### 2

When London's Plague, that day by day enrolled
His thousands dead, nor deigned his rage to abate
Till grass was green in silent Bishopsgate,
Had come and passed like thunder — still, 'tis told,
The monster, driven to earth, in hovels old
And haunts obscure, though dormant, lingered late,
Till the dread Fire, one roaring wave of fate,
Rose, and swept clean his last retreat and hold.
In Europe live the dregs of Plague today,
Dregs of full many an ancient Plague and dire —
Old wrongs, old lies of ages blind and cruel.
What if alone the world-war's world-wide fire
Can purge the ambushed pestilence away?
Yet woe to him that idly lights the fuel!

### 3

A moment's fantasy, the vision came
Of Europe dipped in fiery death, and so
Mounting re-born, with vestal limbs aglow,
Splendid and fragrant from her bath of flame.
It fleeted; and a phantom without name,
Sightless, dismembered, terrible, said: "Lo,
*I* am that ravished Europe men shall know
After the morn of blood and night of shame."
The specter passed, and I beheld alone
The Europe of the present, as she stands,
Powerless from terror of her own vast power,
'Neath novel stars, beside a brink unknown;
And round her the sad Kings, with sleepless hands,
Piling the fagots, hour by doomful hour.
(*1894;* 1894)

## ODE IN MAY

Let me go forth, and share
  The overflowing Sun
  With one wise friend, or one
Better than wise, being fair,
Where the pewit wheels and dips
  On heights of bracken and ling,
And Earth, unto her leaflet tips,
  Tingles with the Spring.

What is so sweet and dear
  As a prosperous morn in May,
  The valiant prime of the day,
And the dauntless youth of the year,
When nothing that asks for bliss,
  Asking aright, is denied,
And half of the world a bridegroom is,
  And half of the world a bride?

The Song of Mingling flows,
  Grave, ceremonial, pure,

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*The World in Armor. Sonnet 1.* 8. **Not . . . sword.** From *Matthew*, 10:34.—"I came not to send peace, but a sword."

*Sonnet 2.* This sonnet refers to the "miraculous year" of 1666, when a disastrous plague in London was followed by a great fire that nearly destroyed the city but had the good result of checking the plague.

3. **Bishopsgate,** a street in the "city," or business section, of London.

12. **world-war's . . . fire,** a striking prophecy of the World War, 1914-18.

*Sonnet 3.* 3. **vestal,** pure.

*Ode in May.* 6. **bracken . . . ling,** fern and heather.

As once, from lips that endure,
The cosmic descant rose,
When the temporal lord of life,
Going his golden way,
Had taken a wondrous maid to wife
That long had said him nay.

For of old the Sun, our sire,
Came wooing the mother of men,
Earth, that was virginal then,
Vestal fire to his fire.
Silent her bosom and coy,
But the strong god sued and pressed;
And born of their starry nuptial joy
Are all that drink of her breast.

And the triumph of him that begot,
And the travail of her that bore,
Behold, they are evermore
As warp and weft in our lot.
We are children of splendor and flame,
Of shuddering, also, and tears.
Magnificent out of the dust we came,
And abject from the Spheres.

O bright irresistible lord!
We are fruit of Earth's womb, each one,
And fruit of thy love, O Sun,
For this thy spouse, thy adored.
To thee as our Father we bow,
Forbidden thy Father to see,
Who is older and greater than thou, as thou
Art greater and older than we.

Thou art but as a word of his speech;
Thou art but as a wave of his hand;
Thou art brief as a glitter of sand
'Twixt tide and tide on his beach;
Thou art less than a spark of his fire,
Or a moment's mood of his soul.
Thou art lost in the notes on the lips of his choir
That chant the chant of the Whole.

(*1897;* 1898)

## THE PLAYMATES

The Wye and the Severn are offspring
Of dark Plinlimmon's side;
And there they were nursed as playmates,
And then — they were sundered wide.

In ways far parted they travel,
By city and castled shore;
And at last, after great adventures,
They meet — very old — once more.

They have long grown rich in homage;
They are full of renown and pride;
But they babble of how they were playmates
On dark Plinlimmon's side.

(*1901*)

## THE BALLAD OF SEMMERWATER

### (NORTH-COUNTRY LEGEND)

Deep asleep, deep asleep,
Deep asleep it lies,
The still lake of Semmerwater
Under the still skies.

And many a fathom, many a fathom,
Many a fathom below,
In a king's tower and a queen's bower
The fishes come and go.

Once there stood by Semmerwater
A mickle town and tall;
King's tower and queen's bower,
And the wakeman on the wall.

Came a beggar halt and sore:
"I faint for lack of bread."
King's tower and queen's bower
Cast him forth unfed.

He knocked at the door of the herdman's cot,
The herdman's cot in the dale.
They gave him of their oatcake,
They gave him of their ale.

He has cursed aloud that city proud,
He has cursed it in its pride;
He has cursed it into Semmerwater
Down the brant hillside;
He has cursed it into Semmerwater,
There to bide.

King's tower and queen's bower,
And a mickle town and tall;
By glimmer of scale and gleam of fin,
Folk have seen them all.
King's tower and queen's bower,
And weed and reed in the gloom;
And a lost city in Semmerwater,
Deep asleep till Doom.

(*1903*)

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20. **cosmic descant.** See note on *England My Mother,* 65-66, page 902. 28. **Vestal,** pure—alluding to the Vestal Virgins at Rome, who always kept a fire burning on their altar. 39. **out of the dust.** See *Genesis,* 2:7.—"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."

*The Playmates.* 1-2. **Wye . . . side.** Plinlimmon is a mountain in South Wales, from opposite slopes of which the Wye and Severn rivers take their rise; after taking widely separate courses, the Wye through Wales and Monmouthshire, the Severn through the western counties of England, they join at a point near the Bristol Channel.

*The Ballad of Semmerwater.* Semmerwater is a lake in Yorkshire, northwest of Leeds, in the depths of which, according to legend, is a submerged city.

7. **bower,** bed-chamber. 10. **mickle,** large. 12. **wakeman,** watchman, sentry. 24. **brant,** steep. 34. **Doom,** the Day of Judgment.

## LEAVETAKING

Pass, thou wild light,
Wild light on peaks that so
Grieve to let go
The day.
Lovely thy tarrying, lovely too is night;
Pass thou away.

Pass, thou wild heart,
Wild heart of youth that still
Hast half a will
To stay.
I grow too old a comrade, let us part.
Pass thou away. (*1905*)

## THE ETERNAL SEARCH

My little maiden two years old, just able
To tower full half a head above the table,
With inquisition keen must needs explore
Whatever in my dwelling hath a door,
Whatever is behind a curtain hid,
Or lurks, a rich enigma, 'neath a lid.
So soon is the supreme desire confessed,
To probe the unknown! So soon begins the quest,
That never ends until asunder fall
The locks and bolts of the Last Door of All.
(*1915*)

## THOMAS HOOD

No courtier this, and naught to courts he owed,
Fawned not on thrones, hymned not the great and callous,
Yet, in one strain, that few remember, showed
He had the password to King Oberon's palace.

And seeing a London seamstress's gray fate,
He of a human heartstring made a thread,
And stitched him such a royal robe of state
That Eastern Kings are poorlier habited.

He saw wan Woman toil with famished eyes;
He saw her bound, and strove to sing her free.
He saw her fall'n; and wrote "The Bridge of Sighs" —
And on it crossed to immortality. (*1915*)

## THE VISITOR ABHORRED

Unknowable Power is o'er me —
The might of unknowable Mind;
And fathomless Time is before me,
And fathomless Time is behind.

And I sit at the feast of Illusion
In the Palace of Baffled Quest,
Awaiting the loathed intrusion
Of the silent Unbidden Guest,

Who passes the sleeping sentry,
And leaves him to slumber on —
And makes his triumphal entry,
And casts his dart, and is gone. (*1924*)

## ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN
(1859- )

### A SHROPSHIRE LAD

1. 1887

From Clee to heaven the beacon burns,
The shires have seen it plain;
From north and south the sign returns,
And beacons burn again.

Look left, look right, the hills are bright,
The dales are light between,
Because 'tis fifty years tonight
That God has saved the Queen.

Now, when the flame they watch not towers
About the soil they trod,
Lads, we'll remember friends of ours
Who shared the work with God.

To skies that knit their heartstrings right,
To fields that bred them brave,
The saviors come not home tonight;
Themselves they could not save.

It dawns in Asia, tombstones show
And Shropshire names are read;
And the Nile spills his overflow
Beside the Severn's dead.

We pledge in peace by farm and town
The Queen they served in war,

---

*Thomas Hood.* Thomas Hood (1798-1845) was an English poet of the humble and the unfortunate.
3. **one strain,** *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies,* in which Oberon, Titania, and other fairy characters of Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream,* threatened with extinction, plead for a continuation of man's interest in the fairy world. 5. **London . . . fate,** *The Song of the Shirt,* describing the dreary life of a sweat-shop worker. 11. **"The Bridge of Sighs,"** a poem in which Hood asks sympathy for an unfortunate girl drowned in the Thames.

*A Shropshire Lad.* Shropshire is a quiet, old-fashioned county of central England, on the border of Wales, with Shrewsbury as its chief city.

*Lyric 1. 1887.* The year 1887, which marked the completion of Victoria's fiftieth year as queen of England, was celebrated as the Golden Jubilee; compare Kipling's *Recessional,* page 893, and Newbolt's *The Vigil,* page 926.

1. **Clee,** a town in the southern part of Shropshire. 17. **Asia.** From 1878 to 1886 the English fought wars in Afghanistan and Burma; compare the wars of empire referred to in Kipling's *"Fuzzy-Wuzzy,"* page 881. 19. **Nile.** In 1882 the English put down a native revolt in Egypt; in 1881-1898 they fought in the Soudan. 20. **Severn,** a large river flowing through Shropshire.

And fire the beacons up and down
  The land they perished for.

"God save the Queen" we living sing,
  From height to height 'tis heard;
And with the rest your voices ring,
  Lads of the Fifty-third.

Oh, God will save her, fear you not!
  Be you the men you've been,
Get you the sons your fathers got,
  And God will save the Queen.

### 2

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

### 3. THE RECRUIT

Leave your home behind, lad,
  And reach your friends your hand,
And go, and luck go with you
  While Ludlow tower shall stand.

Oh, come you home of Sunday,
  When Ludlow streets are still
And Ludlow bells are calling
  To farm and lane and mill.

Or come you home of Monday,
  When Ludlow market hums
And Ludlow chimes are playing
  "The conquering hero comes."

Come you home a hero,
  Or come not home at all;
The lads you leave will mind you
  Till Ludlow tower shall fall.

And you will list the bugle
  That blows in lands of morn,
And make the foes of England
  Be sorry you were born.

And you till trump of doomsday
  On lands of morn may lie,
And make the hearts of comrades
  Be heavy where you die.

Leave your home behind you,
  Your friends by field and town;
Oh, town and field will mind you
  Till Ludlow tower is down.

### 4. REVEILLE

Wake! The silver dusk returning
  Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
  Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake! The vaulted shadow shatters,
  Trampled to the floor it spanned,
And the tent of night in tatters
  Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up! 'Tis late for lying.
  Hear the drums of morning play;
Hark, the empty highways crying,
  "Who'll beyond the hills away?"

Towns and countries woo together,
  Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather
  Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad; thews that lie and cumber
  Sunlit pallets never thrive;
Morns abed and daylight slumber
  Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
  Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad; when the journey's over
  There 'll be time enough to sleep.

### 5

Oh, see how thick the goldcup flowers
  Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
  That never are told again.
Oh, may I squire you round the meads
  And pick you posies gay?
—'Twill do no harm to take my arm.
  "You may, young man, you may."

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
  'Tis now the blood runs gold,
And man and maid had best be glad
  Before the world is old.
What flowers today may flower tomorrow,
  But never as good as new.
—Suppose I wound my arm right round—
  " 'Tis true, young man, 'tis true."

---

28. **Fifty-third**, the Shropshire Regiment of Foot, with a history that includes service in the American Revolution and in campaigns in India and in Egypt.

*Lyric 3. The Recruit.* 4. **Ludlow tower**, the 15th century tower of St. Lawrence's church in Ludlow, a town on the southern border of Shropshire. 15. **mind**, remember. 17. **list**, listen to. 18. **lands of morn**, lands of the East.

*Lyric 5.* 3. **tell**, count.

Some lads there are, 'tis shame to say,
That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
'Tis little enough they leave.
Then keep your heart for men like me
And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
"Perhaps, young man, perhaps."

Oh, look in my eyes then, can you doubt?
— Why, 'tis a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!
We might as well sit down.
— Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
Why must true lovers sigh?
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty —
"Good-by, young man, good-by."

## 6

When the lad for longing sighs,
Mute and dull of cheer and pale,
If at death's own door he lies,
Maiden, you can heal his ail.

Lovers' ills are all to buy:
The wan look, the hollow tone,
The hung head, the sunken eye —
You can have them for your own.

Buy them, buy them; eve and morn
Lovers' ills are all to sell.
Then you can lie down forlorn;
But the lover will be well.

## 7

When smoke stood up from Ludlow,
And mist blew off from Teme,
And blithe afield to plowing
Against the morning beam
I strode beside my team,

The blackbird in the coppice
Looked out to see me stride,
And hearkened as I whistled
The trampling team beside,
And fluted and replied:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
What use to rise and rise?
Rise man a thousand mornings
Yet down at last he lies,
And then the man is wise."

I heard the tune he sang me,
And spied his yellow bill;
I picked a stone and aimed it
And threw it with a will.
Then the bird was still.

Then my soul within me
Took up the blackbird's strain,
And still beside the horses
Along the dewy lane
It sang the song again:

"Lie down, lie down, young yeoman;
The sun moves always west;
The road one treads to labor
Will lead one home to rest,
And that will be the best."

## 8

"Farewell to barn and stack and tree,
Farewell to Severn shore.
Terence, look your last at me,
For I come home no more.

"The sun burns on the half-mown hill,
By now the blood is dried;
And Maurice amongst the hay lies still
And my knife is in his side.

"My mother thinks us long away;
'Tis time the field were mown.
She had two sons at rising day,
Tonight she'll be alone.

"And here's a bloody hand to shake,
And, oh, man, here's good-by;
We'll sweat no more on scythe and rake,
My bloody hands and I.

"I wish you strength to bring you pride,
And a love to keep you clean,
And I wish you luck, come Lammastide,
At racing on the green.

"Long for me the rick will wait,
And long will wait the fold,
And long will stand the empty plate,
And dinner will be cold."

## 9

On moonlit heath and lonesome bank
The sheep beside me graze,
And yon the gallows used to clank
Fast by the four cross ways.

A careless shepherd once would keep
The flocks by moonlight there,
And high amongst the glimmering sheep
The dead man stood on air.

They hang us now in Shrewsbury jail;
The whistles blow forlorn,

---

*Lyric 7.* 2. **Teme,** a river which flows by Ludlow. 11. **yeoman,** a land-owning farmer.

*Lyric 8.* 19. **Lammastide,** August 1.

*Lyric 9.* Cf. Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol,* page 812. 9. **Shrewsbury,** the county town of Shropshire; in its jail criminals convicted and sentenced to death at the county assizes were executed.

And trains all night groan on the rail
  To men that die at morn.

There sleeps in Shrewsbury jail tonight,
  Or wakes, as may betide,
A better lad, if things went right,
  Than most that sleep outside.

And naked to the hangman's noose
  The morning clocks will ring
A neck God made for other use
  Than strangling in a string.

And sharp the link of life will snap,
  And dead on air will stand
Heels that held up as straight a chap
  As treads upon the land.

So here I'll watch the night and wait
  To see the morning shine,
When he will hear the stroke of eight
  And not the stroke of nine;

And wish my friend as sound a sleep
  As lads' I did not know,
That shepherded the moonlit sheep
  A hundred years ago.

### 10. March

The sun at noon to higher air,
Unharnessing the silver Pair
That late before his chariot swam,
Rides on the gold wool of the Ram.

So braver notes the storm-cock sings
To start the rusted wheel of things,
And brutes in field and brutes in pen
Leap that the world goes round again.

The boys are up the woods with day
To fetch the daffodils away,
And home at noonday from the hills
They bring no dearth of daffodils.

Afield for palms the girls repair,
And sure enough the palms are there,
And each will find by hedge or pond
Her waving silver-tufted wand.

In farm and field through all the shire
The eye beholds the heart's desire;
Ah, let not only mine be vain,
For lovers should be loved again.

### 11

On your midnight pallet lying,
  Listen, and undo the door.
Lads that waste the light in sighing
  In the dark should sigh no more;
Night should ease a lover's sorrow;
Therefore, since I go tomorrow,
  Pity me before.

In the land to which I travel,
  The far dwelling, let me say —
Once, if here the couch is gravel,
  In a kinder bed I lay,
And the breast the darnel smothers
Rested once upon another's
  When it was not clay.

### 12

When I watch the living meet,
  And the moving pageant file
Warm and breathing through the street
  Where I lodge a little while,

If the heats of hate and lust
  In the house of flesh are strong,
Let me mind the house of dust
  Where my sojourn shall be long.

In the nation that is not
  Nothing stands that stood before;
There revenges are forgot,
  And the hater hates no more;

Lovers lying two and two
  Ask not whom they sleep beside,
And the bridegroom all night through
  Never turns him to the bride.

### 13

When I was one-and-twenty
  I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas,
  But not your heart, away;
Give pearls away and rubies,
  But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty—
  No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
  I heard him say again,
"The heart out of the bosom
  Was never given in vain;
'Tis paid with sighs a plenty
  And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty,
  And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

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*Lyric 10. March.* Compare the opening of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.*
2. **silver Pair,** the Pisces, or Fishes, the sign of the zodiac through which the sun passes during the month prior to March 21. 4. **Ram,** Aries, the sign of the zodiac into which the sun passes on March 21. 5. **storm-cock,** the missel thrush, called the storm-cock because it sings early in the spring and is said to presage stormy weather.

*Lyric 11.* 12. **darnel,** a grass-like weed often found in grainfields.

### 14

There pass the careless people
That call their souls their own;
Here by the road I loiter,
How idle and alone.

Ah, past the plunge of plummet,
In seas I cannot sound,
My heart and soul and senses,
World without end, are drowned.

His folly has not fellow
Beneath the blue of day
That gives to man or woman
His heart and soul away.

There flowers no balm to sain him
From east of earth to west
That's lost for everlasting
The heart out of his breast.

Here by the laboring highway
With empty hands I stroll;
Sea-deep, till doomsday morning,
Lie lost my heart and soul.

### 15

Look not in my eyes, for fear
They mirror true the sight I see,
And there you find your face too clear
And love it and be lost like me.
One the long nights through must lie,
Spent in star-defeated sighs,
But why should you as well as I
Perish?—gaze not in my eyes.

A Grecian lad, as I hear tell,
One that many loved in vain,
Looked into a forest well
And never looked away again.
There, when the turf in springtime flowers,
With downward eye and gazes sad,
Stands amid the glancing showers
A jonquil, not a Grecian lad.

### 16

It nods and curtsies and recovers
When the wind blows above,
The nettle on the graves of lovers
That hanged themselves for love.

The nettle nods, the wind blows over,
The man, he does not move,
The lover of the grave, the lover
That hanged himself for love.

### 17

Twice a week the winter thorough
Here stood I to keep the goal;
Football then was fighting sorrow
For the young man's soul.

Now in Maytime to the wicket
Out I march with bat and pad;
See the son of grief at cricket
Trying to be glad.

Try I will—no harm in trying;
Wonder 'tis how little mirth
Keeps the bones of man from lying
On the bed of earth.

### 18

Oh, when I was in love with you,
Then I was clean and brave,
And miles around the wonder grew
How well did I behave.

And now the fancy passes by,
And nothing will remain,
And miles around they'll say that I
Am quite myself again.

### 19. TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

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*Lyric 14.* 13. **sain,** heal.

*Lyric 15.* 9. **Grecian lad,** Narcissus, who repulsed all who sought his love and was, in retribution, fated to fall in love with his own image in a spring; in hopeless longing he pined away, and was changed into the flower that bears his name.

*Lyric 19. To an Athlete Dying Young.* 11. **laurel,** used as a symbol of triumph.

And round that early-laureled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

### 20

Oh, fair enough are sky and plain,
But I know fairer far:
Those are as beautiful again
That in the water are;

The pools and rivers wash so clean
The trees and clouds and air,
The like on earth was never seen,
And, oh, that I were there.

These are the thoughts I often think
As I stand gazing down
In act upon the cressy brink
To strip and dive and drown;

But in the golden-sanded brooks
And azure meres I spy
A silly lad that longs and looks
And wishes he were I.

### 21. BREDON HILL

In summertime on Bredon
The bells they sound so clear;
Round both the shires they ring them
In steeples far and near,
A happy noise to hear.

Here of a Sunday morning
My love and I would lie,
And see the colored counties,
And hear the larks so high
About us in the sky.

The bells would ring to call her
In valleys miles away:
"Come all to church, good people;
Good people, come and pray."
But here my love would stay.

And I would turn and answer
Among the springing thyme,
"Oh, peal upon our wedding,
And we will hear the chime,
And come to church in time."

But when the snows at Christmas
On Bredon top were strown,
My love rose up so early
And stole out unbeknown
And went to church alone.

They tolled the one bell only,
Groom there was none to see,
The mourners followed after,
And so to church went she,
And would not wait for me.

The bells they sound on Bredon,
And still the steeples hum,
"Come all to church, good people"—
Oh, noisy bells, be dumb;
I hear you, I will come.

### 22

The street sounds to the soldiers' tread,
And out we troop to see;
A single redcoat turns his head,
He turns and looks at me.

My man, from sky to sky's so far,
We never crossed before;
Such leagues apart the world's ends are,
We're like to meet no more;

What thoughts at heart have you and I
We cannot stop to tell;
But dead or living, drunk or dry,
Soldier, I wish you well.

### 23

The lads in their hundreds to Ludlow come in for the fair;
There's men from the barn and the forge and the mill and the fold,
The lads for the girls and the lads for the liquor are there,
And there with the rest are the lads that will never be old.

There's chaps from the town and the field and the till and the cart,
And many to count are the stalwart, and many the brave,
And many the handsome of face and the handsome of heart,
And few that will carry their looks or their truth to the grave.

I wish one could know them, I wish there were tokens to tell
The fortunate fellows that now you can never discern;
And then one could talk with them friendly and wish them farewell
And watch them depart on the way that they will not return.

But now you may stare as you like and there's nothing to scan;
And brushing your elbow unguessed-at and not to be told

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*Lyric 21. Bredon Hill.* Bredon Hill is a rounded hill (961 ft. high), commanding an extensive view, in southern Worcestershire, northeast of Tewkesbury.

8. **counties.** The counties of Worcestershire. Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Warwickshire, and Oxfordshire may be seen from Bredon Hill.

They carry back bright to the coiner the mintage of man,
The lads that will die in their glory and never be old.

### 24

Say, lad, have you things to do?
Quick, then, while your day's at prime!
Quick, and if 'tis work for two,
Here am I, man; now's your time.

Send me now, and I shall go;
Call me, I shall hear you call;
Use me ere they lay me low
Where a man's no use at all;

Ere the wholesome flesh decay,
And the willing nerve be numb,
And the lips lack breath to say,
"No, my lad, I cannot come."

### 25

This time of year a twelvemonth past,
When Fred and I would meet,
We needs must jangle, till at last
We fought and I was beat.

So then the summer fields about,
Till rainy days began,
Rose Harland on her Sundays out
Walked with the better man.

The better man she walks with still,
Though now 'tis not with Fred;
A lad that lives and has his will
Is worth a dozen dead.

Fred keeps the house all kinds of weather,
And clay's the house he keeps;
When Rose and I walk out together
Stock-still lies Fred and sleeps.

### 26

Along the field as we came by
A year ago, my love and I,
The aspen over stile and stone
Was talking to itself alone.
"Oh, who are these that kiss and pass?
A country lover and his lass;
Two lovers looking to be wed;
And time shall put them both to bed,
But she shall lie with earth above,
And he beside another love."

And sure enough beneath the tree
There walks another love with me,
And overhead the aspen heaves
Its rainy-sounding silver leaves;
And I spell nothing in their stir,
But now perhaps they speak to her,
And plain for her to understand
They talk about a time at hand
When I shall sleep with clover clad,
And she beside another lad.

### 27

"Is my team plowing,
That I was used to drive
And hear the harness jingle
When I was man alive?"

Aye, the horses trample,
The harness jingles now;
No change though you lie under
The land you used to plow.

"Is football playing
Along the river shore,
With lads to chase the leather,
Now I stand up no more?"

Aye, the ball is flying,
The lads play heart and soul;
The goal stands up, the keeper
Stands up to keep the goal.

"Is my girl happy,
That I thought hard to leave,
And has she tired of weeping
As she lies down at eve?"

Aye, she lies down lightly,
She lies not down to weep;
Your girl is well contented.
Be still, my lad, and sleep.

"Is my friend hearty,
Now I am thin and pine,
And has he found to sleep in
A better bed than mine?"

Yes, lad, I lie easy,
I lie as lads would choose;
I cheer a dead man's sweetheart —
Never ask me whose.

### 28. THE WELSH MARCHES

High the vanes of Shrewsbury gleam
Islanded in Severn stream;
The bridges from the steepled crest
Cross the water east and west.

The flag of morn in conqueror's state
Enters at the English gate;
The vanquished eve, as night prevails,
Bleeds upon the road to Wales.

---

*Lyric 28. The Welsh Marches.* The border land, or Marches, between Wales and England was from the 5th to the 13th century, the scene of bloody conflict between the native Celts and the Saxon and Norman invaders.

1. **Shrewsbury**, the county town of Shropshire, located on the Severn River.

Ages since the vanquished bled
Round my mother's marriage-bed;
There the ravens feasted far
About the open house of war.

When Severn down to Buildwas ran,
Colored with the death of man,
Couched upon her brother's grave
The Saxon got me on the slave.

The sound of fight is silent long
That began the ancient wrong;
Long the voice of tears is still
That wept of old the endless ill.

In my heart it has not died,
The war that sleeps on Severn side;
They cease not fighting, east and west,
On the marches of my breast.

Here the truceless armies yet
Trample, rolled in blood and sweat,
They kill and kill and never die;
And I think that each is I.

None will part us, none undo
The knot that makes one flesh of two,
Sick with hatred, sick with pain,
Strangling — When shall we be slain?

When shall I be dead and rid
Of the wrong my father did?
How long, how long, till spade and hearse
Put to sleep my mother's curse?

### 29. THE LENT LILY

'Tis spring; come out to ramble
  The hilly brakes around,
For under thorn and bramble
  About the hollow ground
  The primroses are found.

And there's the windflower chilly
  With all the winds at play,
And there's the Lenten lily
  That has not long to stay
  And dies on Easter day.

And since till girls go maying
  You find the primrose still,
And find the windflower playing
  With every wind at will,
  But not the daffodil,

Bring baskets now, and sally
  Upon the spring's array,
And bear from hill and valley
  The daffodil away
  That dies on Easter day.

### 30

Others, I am not the first,
Have willed more mischief than they durst;
If in the breathless night I too
Shiver now, 'tis nothing new.

More than I, if truth were told,
Have stood and sweated hot and cold,
And through their reins in ice and fire
Fear contended with desire.

Agued once like me were they,
But I like them shall win my way
Lastly to the bed of mold
Where there's neither heat nor cold.

But from my grave across my brow
Plays no wind of healing now,
And fire and ice within me fight
Beneath the suffocating night.

### 31

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings double,
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger
When Uricon the city stood;
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman
At yonder heaving hill would stare;
The blood that warms an English yeoman,
The thoughts that hurt him, they were there.

There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high;
The tree of man was never quiet —
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double;
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone.
Today the Roman and his trouble
Are ashes under Uricon.

---

13. **Buildwas,** a town on the Severn, twelve miles below Shrewsbury.

*Lyric 29.* 6. **windflower,** the anemone.

*Lyric 31.* 1. **Wenlock Edge,** a range of hills in southern Shropshire, southeast of Shrewsbury. 2. **the Wrekin,** an isolated extinct volcano southeast of Shrewsbury. 5. **holt,** wood. **hanger,** a thicket on a steep hillside. 6. **Uricon,** Uriconium, an ancient Roman city near the modern Wroxeter, southeast of Shrewsbury; during the Roman occupation (1st to 5th centuries A.D.) it was the capital of Britannia Secunda, one of the four provinces of Britain; it was burned by the Saxons in 584 and is now in ruins.

### 32

From far, from eve and morning
And yon twelve-winded sky,
The stuff of life to knit me
Blew hither; here am I.

Now — for a breath I tarry
Nor yet disperse apart —
Take my hand quick and tell me,
What have you in your heart.

Speak now, and I will answer;
How shall I help you, say;
Ere to the wind's twelve quarters
I take my endless way.

### 33

If truth in hearts that perish
Could move the powers on high,
I think the love I bear you
Should make you not to die.

Sure, sure, if steadfast meaning,
If single thought could save,
The world might end tomorrow,
You should not see the grave.

This long and sure-set liking,
This boundless will to please,
— Oh, you should live forever
If there were help in these.

But now, since all is idle,
To this lost heart be kind,
Ere to a town you journey
Where friends are ill to find.

### 34. THE NEW MISTRESS

"*Oh, sick I am to see you; will you never let me be?*
*You may be good for something, but you are not good for me.*
*Oh, go where you are wanted, for you are not wanted here.*
And that was all the farewell when I parted from my dear.

"I will go where I am wanted, to a lady born and bred,
Who will dress me free for nothing in a uniform of red;
She will not be sick to see me if I only keep it clean;
I will go where I am wanted for a soldier of the Queen.

"I will go where I am wanted, for the sergeant does not mind;
He may be sick to see me, but he treats me very kind;
He gives me beer and breakfast and a ribbon for my cap,
And I never knew a sweetheart spend her money on a chap.

"I will go where I am wanted, where there's room for one or two,
And the men are none too many for the work there is to do;
Where the standing line wears thinner and the dropping dead lie thick;
And the enemies of England they shall see me and be sick."

### 35

On the idle hill of summer,
Sleepy with the flow of streams,
Far I hear the steady drummer
Drumming like a noise in dreams.

Far and near and low and louder
On the roads of earth go by,
Dear to friends and food for powder
Soldiers marching, all to die.

East and west on fields forgotten
Bleach the bones of comrades slain,
Lovely lads and dead and rotten;
None that go return again.

Far the calling bugles hollo,
High the screaming fife replies,
Gay the files of scarlet follow;
Woman bore me, I will rise.

### 36

White in the moon the long road lies,
The moon stands blank above;
White in the moon the long road lies
That leads me from my love.

Still hangs the hedge without a gust,
Still, still the shadows stay;
My feet upon the moonlit dust
Pursue the ceaseless way.

The world is round, so travelers tell,
And straight though reach the track,
Trudge on, trudge on, 'twill all be well,
The way will guide one back.

But ere the circle homeward hies
Far, far must it remove;
White in the moon the long road lies
That leads me from my love.

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*Lyric 32.* 2. **twelve-winded,** having all the winds of heaven.

### 37

As through the wild green hills of Wyre
The train ran, changing sky and shire,
And far behind, a fading crest,
Low in the forsaken west
Sank the high-reared head of Clee,
My hand lay empty on my knee.
Aching on my knee it lay;
That morning half a shire away
So many an honest fellow's fist
Had wellnigh wrung it from the wrist.
Hand, said I, since now we part
From fields and men we know by heart,
For strangers' faces, strangers' lands—
Hand, you have held true fellows' hands.
Be clean, then; rot before you do
A thing they'd not believe of you.
You and I must keep from shame
In London streets the Shropshire name;
On banks of Thames they must not say
Severn breeds worse men than they;
And friends abroad must bear in mind
Friends at home they leave behind.
Oh, I shall be stiff and cold
When I forget you, hearts of gold;
The land where I shall mind you not
Is the land where all's forgot.
And if my foot returns no more
To Teme nor Corve nor Severn shore,
Luck, my lads, be with you still
By falling stream and standing hill,
By chiming tower and whispering tree,
Men that made a man of me.
About your work in town and farm
Still you'll keep my head from harm,
Still you'll help me, hands that gave
A grasp to friend me to the grave.

### 38

The winds out of the west land blow,
My friends have breathed them there;
Warm with the blood of lads I know
Comes east the sighing air.

It fanned their temples, filled their lungs,
Scattered their forelocks free;
My friends made words of it with tongues
That talk no more to me.

Their voices, dying as they fly,
Loose on the wind are sown;
The names of men blow soundless by,
My fellows and my own.

Oh, lads, at home I heard you plain,
But here your speech is still,
And down the sighing wind in vain
You hollo from the hill.

The wind and I, we both were there,
But neither long abode;
Now through the friendless world we fare
And sigh upon the road.

### 39

'Tis time, I think, by Wenlock town
The golden broom should blow;
The hawthorn sprinkled up and down
Should charge the land with snow.

Spring will not wait the loiterer's time
Who keeps so long away;
So others wear the broom and climb
The hedgerows heaped with may.

Oh, tarnish late on Wenlock Edge,
Gold that I never see;
Lie long, high snowdrifts in the hedge
That will not shower on me.

### 40

Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows;
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what farms are those?

That is the land of lost content,
I see it shining plain,
The happy highways where I went
And cannot come again.

### 41

In my own shire, if I was sad,
Homely comforters I had:
The earth, because my heart was sore,
Sorrowed for the son she bore;
And standing hills, long to remain,
Shared their short-lived comrade's pain.
And bound for the same bourn as I,
On every road I wandered by,
Trod beside me, close and dear,
The beautiful and death-struck year:
Whether in the woodland brown
I heard the beechnut rustle down,
And saw the purple crocus pale
Flower about the autumn dale;
Or littering far the fields of May
Lady-smocks a-bleaching lay,
And like a skylit water stood
The bluebells in the azured wood.

---

*Lyric 37.* 1. **Wyre,** a forest on the boundary between Shropshire and Worcestershire, near the Severn River. 5. **Clee,** Clee Hill, in Shropshire, about ten miles northwest of the forest of Wyre. 28. **Teme . . . Corve . . . Severn,** rivers in southwestern Shropshire.

*Lyric 39.* 1. **Wenlock town.** Wenlock is a small town southeast of Shrewsbury. 2. **broom,** a stiff shrub with yellow blossoms. **blow,** bloom. 8. **may,** hawthorn.

Yonder, lightening other loads,
The seasons range the country roads,
But here in London streets I ken
No such helpmates, only men;
And these are not in plight to bear,
If they would, another's care.
They have enough as 'tis; I see
In many an eye that measures me
The mortal sickness of a mind
Too unhappy to be kind.
Undone with misery, all they can
Is to hate their fellow man;
And till they drop they needs must still
Look at you and wish you ill.

## 42. THE MERRY GUIDE

Once in the wind of morning
I ranged the thymy wold;
The world-wide air was azure,
And all the brooks ran gold.

There through the dews beside me,
Behold a youth that trod,
With feathered cap on forehead,
And poised a golden rod.

With mien to match the morning
And gay delightful guise
And friendly brows and laughter,
He looked me in the eyes.

Oh, whence, I asked, and whither?
He smiled and would not say,
And looked at me and beckoned,
And laughed and led the way.

And with kind looks and laughter
And naught to say beside,
We two went on together,
I and my happy guide.

Across the glittering pastures
And empty upland still
And solitude of shepherds
High in the folded hill,

By hanging woods and hamlets
That gaze through orchards down
On many a windmill turning
And far-discovered town,

With gay regards of promise
And sure unslackened stride
And smiles and nothing spoken,
Led on my merry guide.

By blowing realms of woodland
With sunstruck vanes afield
And cloud-led shadows sailing
About the windy weald,

By valley-guarded granges
And silver waters wide,
Content at heart I followed
With my delightful guide.

And like the cloudy shadows
Across the country blown,
We two fare on forever,
But not we two alone.

With the great gale we journey
That breathes from gardens thinned,
Borne in the drift of blossoms
Whose petals throng the wind;

Buoyed on the heaven-heard whisper
Of dancing leaflets whirled
From all the woods that autumn
Bereaves in all the world.

And midst the fluttering legion
Of all that ever died
I follow, and before us
Goes the delightful guide,

With lips that brim with laughter
But never once respond,
And feet that fly on feathers,
And serpent-circled wand.

## 43. THE IMMORTAL PART

When I meet the morning beam,
Or lay me down at night to dream,
I hear my bones within me say,
"Another night, another day.

"When shall this slough of sense be cast,
This dust of thoughts be laid at last,
The man of flesh and soul be slain
And the man of bone remain?

"This tongue that talks, these lungs that shout,
These thews that hustle us about,
This brain that fills the skull with schemes,
And its humming hive of dreams —

"These today are proud in power
And lord it in their little hour;
The immortal bones obey control
Of dying flesh and dying soul.

---

*Lyric 42. The Merry Guide.* 2. **wold,** a low hill. 6. **youth,** Mercury, the messenger of the gods, wearing a winged cap and sandals and bearing the caduceus, a staff twined with serpents (line 60), as the symbol of the office. 24. **folded hill,** a hill pastured with sheep.

36. **weald,** open country. 37. **granges,** country houses with surrounding farm lands

" 'Tis long till eve and morn are gone;
Slow the endless night comes on,
And late to fullness grows the birth
That shall last as long as earth.

"Wanderers eastward, wanderers west,
Know you why you cannot rest?
'Tis that every mother's son
Travails with a skeleton.

"Lie down in the bed of dust
Bear the fruit that bear you must;
Bring the eternal seed to light,
And morn is all the same as night.

"Rest you so from trouble sore,
Fear the heat o' the sun no more,
Nor the snowing winter wild,
Now you labor not with child.

"Empty vessel, garment cast,
We that wore you long shall last
— Another night, another day."
So my bones within me say.

Therefore they shall do my will
Today while I am master still,
And flesh and soul, now both are strong,
Shall hale the sullen slaves along,

Before this fire of sense decay,
This smoke of thought blow clean away,
And leave with ancient night alone
The steadfast and enduring bone.

### 44

Shot? so quick, so clean an ending?
Oh, that was right, lad, that was brave.
Yours was not an ill for mending;
'Twas best to take it to the grave.

Oh, you had forethought, you could reason,
And saw your road and where it led,
And early wise and brave in season
Put the pistol to your head.

Oh, soon, and better so than later
After long disgrace and scorn,
You shot dead the household traitor,
The soul that should not have been born.

Right you guessed the rising morrow
And scorned to tread the mire you must;
Dust's your wages, son of sorrow,
But men may come to worse than dust.

Souls undone, undoing others —
Long time since the tale began.
You would not live to wrong your brothers;
Oh, lad, you died as fits a man.

Now to your grave shall friend and stranger
With ruth and some with envy come;
Undishonored, clear of danger,
Clean of guilt, pass hence and home.

Turn safe to rest, no dreams, no waking;
And here, man, here's the wreath I've made.
'Tis not a gift that's worth the taking,
But wear it and it will not fade.

### 45

If it chance your eye offend you,
Pluck it out, lad, and be sound;
'Twill hurt, but here are salves to friend you,
And many a balsam grows on ground.

And if your hand or foot offend you,
Cut it off, lad, and be whole;
But play the man, stand up and end you,
When your sickness is your soul.

### 46

Bring, in this timeless grave to throw,
No cypress, somber on the snow;
Snap not from the bitter yew
His leaves that live December through;
Break no rosemary, bright with rime
And sparkling to the cruel clime;
Nor plod the winter land to look
For willows in the icy brook
To cast them leafless round him; bring
No spray that ever buds in spring.

But if the Christmas field has kept
Awns the last gleaner overstept,
Or shriveled flax, whose flower is blue
A single season, never two;
Or if one haulm whose year is o'er
Shivers on the upland frore
— Oh, bring from hill and stream and plain
Whatever will not flower again,
To give him comfort. He and those
Shall bide eternal bedfellows
Where low upon the couch he lies
Whence he never shall arise.

### 47. THE CARPENTER'S SON

"Here the hangman stops his cart;
Now the best of friends must part.
Fare you well, for ill fare I;
Live, lads, and I will die.

---

*Lyric 45.* 1-2. **eye . . . sound.** From *Mark,* 9:47.—"If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." 5-6. **hand . . . off.** From *Mark,* 9:43-45.—"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off . . . And if thy foot offend thee cut it off . . ."

*Lyric 46.* 2-8. **cypress . . . yew . . . rosemary . . . willows,** symbols of sorrow and mourning. 12. **Awns,** beards of wheat or rye. 15. **haulm,** straw. 16. **frore,** frozen.

"Oh, at home had I but stayed
'Prenticed to my father's trade,
Had I stuck to plane and adze,
I had not been lost, my lads.

"Then I might have built perhaps
Gallows-trees for other chaps,
Never dangled on my own,
Had I but left ill alone.

"Now, you see, they hang me high,
And the people passing by
Stop to shake their fists and curse;
So 'tis come from ill to worse.

"Here hang I, and right and left
Two poor fellows hang for theft;
All the same's the luck we prove,
Though the midmost hangs for love.

"Comrades all, that stand and gaze,
Walk henceforth in other ways —
See my neck and save your own;
Comrades all, leave ill alone.

"Make some day a decent end,
Shrewder fellows than your friend.
Fare you well, for ill fare I;
Live, lads, and I will die."

### 48

Be still, my soul, be still; the arms you bear are brittle,
Earth and high heaven are fixed of old and founded strong.
Think rather — call to thought, if now you grieve a little,
The days when we had rest, O soul, for they were long.

Men loved unkindness then, but lightless in the quarry
I slept and saw not; tears fell down, I did not mourn;
Sweat ran and blood sprang out and I was never sorry.
Then it was well with me, in days ere I was born.

Now, and I muse for why and never find the reason,
I pace the earth, and drink the air, and feel the sun.
Be still, be still, my soul; it is but for a season;
Let us endure an hour and see injustice done.

Aye, look — high heaven and earth ail from the prime foundation;
All thoughts to rive the heart are here, and all are vain:
Horror and scorn and hate and fear and indignation —
Oh, why did I awake? when shall I sleep again?

### 49

Think no more, lad; laugh, be jolly.
Why should men make haste to die?
Empty heads and tongues a-talking
Make the rough road easy walking,
And the feather pate of folly
Bears the falling sky.

Oh, 'tis jesting, dancing, drinking
Spins the heavy world around.
If young hearts were not so clever,
Oh, they would be young forever.
Think no more; 'tis only thinking
Lays lads underground.

### 50

*Clunton and Clunbury,*
*Clungunford and Clun,*
*Are the quietest places*
*Under the sun.*

In valleys of springs of rivers,
By Ony and Teme and Clun,
The country for easy livers,
The quietest under the sun,

We still had sorrows to lighten,
One could not be always glad,
And lads knew trouble at Knighton
When I was a Knighton lad.

By bridges that Thames runs under,
In London, the town built ill,
'Tis sure small matter for wonder
If sorrow is with one still.

And if as a lad grows older
The troubles he bears are more,
He carries his griefs on a shoulder
That handseled them long before.

Where shall one halt to deliver
This luggage I'd lief set down?
Not Thames, not Teme is the river,
Nor London nor Knighton the town;

---

*Lyric 50.* **Clunton . . . Clun,** villages in southwestern Shropshire.

2. **Ony, Teme, Clun,** rivers in the southwestern corner of Shropshire. 7. **Knighton,** a town on the river Teme. 16. **handseled,** experienced for the first time.

'Tis a long way further than Knighton,
A quieter place than Clun,
Where doomsday may thunder and lighten
And little 'twill matter to one.

### 51

Loitering with a vacant eye
Along the Grecian gallery,
And brooding on my heavy ill,
I met a statue standing still.
Still in marble stone stood he,
And steadfastly he looked at me.
"Well met," I thought the look would say,
"We both were fashioned far away;
We neither knew, when we were young,
These Londoners we live among."

Still he stood and eyed me hard,
An earnest and a grave regard:
"What, lad, drooping with your lot?
I, too, would be where I am not.
I, too, survey that endless line
Of men whose thoughts are not as mine.
Years, ere you stood up from rest,
On my neck the collar prest;
Years, when you lay down your ill,
I shall stand and bear it still.
Courage, lad, 'tis not for long;
Stand, quit you like stone, be strong."
So I thought his look would say;
And light on me my trouble lay,
And I slept out in flesh and bone
Manful like the man of stone.

### 52

Far in a western brookland
That bred me long ago
The poplars stand and tremble
By pools I used to know.

There, in the windless night-time,
The wanderer, marveling why,
Halts on the bridge to hearken
How soft the poplars sigh.

He hears; no more remembered
In fields where I was known,
Here I lie down in London
And turn to rest alone.

There, by the starlit fences,
The wanderer halts and hears
My soul that lingers sighing
About the glimmering weirs.

### 53. THE TRUE LOVER

The lad came to the door at night,
When lovers crown their vows,
And whistled soft and out of sight
In shadow of the boughs.

"I shall not vex you with my face
Henceforth, my love, for aye;
So take me in your arms a space
Before the east is gray.

"When I from hence away am past
I shall not find a bride,
And you shall be the first and last
I ever lay beside."

She heard and went and knew not why;
Her heart to his she laid;
Light was the air beneath the sky
But dark under the shade.

"Oh, do you breathe, lad, that your breast
Seems not to rise and fall,
And here upon my bosom prest
There beats no heart at all?"

"Oh, loud, my girl, it once would knock—
You should have felt it then;
But since for you I stopped the clock
It never goes again."

"Oh, lad, what is it, lad, that drips
Wet from your neck on mine?
What is it falling on my lips,
My lad, that tastes of brine?"

"Oh, like enough 'tis blood, my dear,
For when the knife has slit
The throat across from ear to ear
'Twill bleed because of it."

Under the stars the air was light
But dark below the boughs,
The still air of the speechless night,
When lovers crown their vows.

### 54

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

### 55

Westward on the high-hilled plains
Where for me the world began,

---

*Lyric 51.* 2. **Grecian gallery**, in the British Museum, London.
*Lyric 52.* 16. **weirs**, pools of water above a dam.

Still, I think, in newer veins
Frets the changeless blood of man.

Now that other lads than I
Strip to bathe on Severn shore,
They, no help, for all they try,
Tread the mill I trod before.

There, when hueless is the west
And the darkness hushes wide,
Where the lad lies down to rest
Stands the troubled dream beside.

There, on thoughts that once were mine,
Day looks down the eastern steep,
And the youth at morning shine
Makes the vow he will not keep.

### 56. THE DAY OF BATTLE

"Far I hear the bugle blow
To call me where I would not go,
And the guns begin the song,
'Soldier, fly or stay for long.'

"Comrade, if to turn and fly
Made a soldier never die,
Fly I would, for who would not?
'Tis sure no pleasure to be shot.

"But since the man that runs away
Lives to die another day,
And cowards' funerals, when they come,
Are not wept so well at home,

"Therefore, though the best is bad,
Stand and do the best, my lad;
Stand and fight and see your slain,
And take the bullet in your brain."

### 57

You smile upon your friend today,
Today his ills are over;
You hearken to the lover's say,
And happy is the lover.

'Tis late to hearken, late to smile,
But better late than never;
I shall have lived a little while
Before I die forever.

### 58

When I came last to Ludlow
Amidst the moonlight pale,
Two friends kept step beside me,
Two honest lads and hale.

Now Dick lies long in the churchyard,
And Ned lies long in jail,
And I come home to Ludlow
Amidst the moonlight pale.

### 59. THE ISLE OF PORTLAND

The star-filled seas are smooth tonight
From France to England strown;
Black towers above the Portland light
The felon-quarried stone.

On yonder island, not to rise,
Never to stir forth free,
Far from his folk a dead lad lies
That once was friends with me.

Lie you easy, dream you light,
And sleep you fast for aye;
And luckier may you find the night
Than ever you found the day.

### 60

Now hollow fires burn out to black,
And lights are guttering low;
Square your shoulders, lift your pack,
And leave your friends and go.

Oh, never fear, man, naught's to dread,
Look not left nor right;
In all the endless road you tread
There's nothing but the night.

### 61. HUGHLEY STEEPLE

The vane on Hughley steeple
Veers bright, a far-known sign,
And there lie Hughley people,
And there lie friends of mine.
Tall in their midst the tower
Divides the shade and sun,
And the clock strikes the hour
And tells the time to none.

To south the headstones cluster,
The sunny mounds lie thick;
The dead are more in muster
At Hughley than the quick.
North, for a soon-told number,
Chill graves the sexton delves,
And steeple-shadowed slumber
The slayers of themselves.

To north, to south, lie parted,
With Hughley tower above,

---

*Lyric 56. The Day of Battle.* 9-10. **man . . . day,** an ancient proverb of which Menander, Tertullian, Erasmus, Butler (*Hudibras,* 3:243), and Goldsmith (*Art of Poetry on a New Plan*) have given versions.

*Lyric 59. The Isle of Portland.* The Isle of Portland is a rocky peninsula extending into the English Channel near Weymouth; Portland Prison is located here.

3. **Portland light,** a lighthouse at the southern extremity of the peninsula. 4. **felon-quarried stone,** the mile-long Portland Breakwater, constructed by convict labor in 1849-72.

*Lyric 61. Hughley Steeple.* Hughley is a village near Shrewsbury.

The kind, the single-hearted,
The lads I used to love.
And, south or north, 'tis only
A choice of friends one knows,
And I shall ne'er be lonely
Asleep with these or those.

### 62

"Terence, this is stupid stuff:
You eat your victuals fast enough;
There can't be much amiss, 'tis clear,
To see the rate you drink your beer.
But, oh, good Lord, the verse you make,
It gives a chap the bellyache.
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;
It sleeps well, the horned head.
We poor lads, 'tis our turn now
To hear such tunes as killed the cow.
Pretty friendship 'tis to rime
Your friends to death before their time
Moping melancholy mad.
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad."

Why, if 'tis dancing you would be,
There's brisker pipes than poetry.
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,
Or why was Burton built on Trent?
Oh, many a peer of England brews
Livelier liquor than the Muse,
And malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink
For fellows whom it hurts to think;
Look into the pewter pot
To see the world as the world's not.
And faith, 'tis pleasant till 'tis past,
The mischief is that 'twill not last.
Oh, I have been to Ludlow fair
And left my necktie God knows where,
And carried half way home, or near,
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer.
Then the world seemed none so bad,
And I myself a sterling lad;
And down in lovely muck I've lain,
Happy till I woke again.
Then I saw the morning sky —
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;
The world, it was the old world yet,
I was I, my things were wet,
And nothing now remained to do
But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still
Much good, but much less good than ill,
And while the sun and moon endure
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
I'd face it as a wise man would,
And train for ill and not for good.
'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale
Is not so brisk a brew as ale;
Out of a stem that scored the hand
I wrung it in a weary land.
But take it — if the smack is sour,
The better for the embittered hour;
It should do good to heart and head
When your soul is in my soul's stead;
And I will friend you, if I may,
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East;
There, when kings will sit to feast,
They get their fill before they think
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.
He gathered all that springs to birth
From the many-venomed earth;
First a little, thence to more,
He sampled all her killing store;
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,
Sate the king when healths went round.
They put arsenic in his meat
And stared aghast to watch him eat;
They poured strychnine in his cup
And shook to see him drink it up.
They shook, they stared as white's their shirt;
Them it was their poison hurt.
— I tell the tale that I heard told.
Mithridates, he died old.

### 63

I hoed and trenched and weeded,
And took the flowers to fair.
I brought them home unheeded;
The hue was not the wear.

So up and down I sow them
For lads like me to find,
When I shall lie below them,
A dead man out of mind.

Some seed the birds devour,
And some the season mars,
But here and there will flower
The solitary stars,

And fields will yearly bear them
As light-leaved spring comes on,
And luckless lads will wear them
When I am dead and gone. (1896)

---

*Lyric 62.* 18. **Burton . . . Trent.** In the sixteen breweries of Burton-upon-Trent, a city in Derbyshire, three million barrels of beer are annually produced. More than one peer of England owes his nobility to a fortune made in brewing. 22. **justify . . . man,** given by Milton as his purpose in writing *Paradise Lost* (Book I, line 26).

51. **stem . . . hand.** Experience is a raw material more painful to handle than the grain from which ale is brewed. 59. **a king,** etc. Realizing that his enemies were conspiring to poison him, Mithridates VI, king of Pontus (120-63 B.C.), inured himself to poison by taking it in gradually increased doses until it no longer had any effect upon him; so, at least, Pliny affirms in his *Natural History,* 25:2.

## GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL*
## ("A. E.") (1867-1935)

### BY THE MARGIN OF THE GREAT DEEP

When the breath of twilight blows to flame the misty skies,
All its vaporous sapphire, violet glow and silver gleam
With their magic flood me through the gateway of the eyes;
I am one with the twilight's dream.

When the trees and skies and fields are one in dusky mood,
Every heart of man is rapt within the mother's breast;
Full of peace and sleep and dreams in the vasty quietude,
I am one with their hearts at rest.

From our immemorial joys of hearth and home and love
Strayed away along the margin of the unknown tide,
All its reach of soundless calm can thrill me far above
Word or touch from the lips beside.

Aye, and deep and deep and deeper let me drink and draw
From the olden fountain more than light or peace or dream,
Such primeval being as o'erfills the heart with awe,
Growing one with its silent stream.
(1894)

### THE HERMIT

Now the quietude of earth
Nestles deep my heart within;
Friendships new and strange have birth
Since I left the city's din.

Here the tempest stays its guile,
Like a big kind brother plays,
Romps and pauses here awhile
From its immemorial ways.

Now the silver light of dawn
Slipping through the leaves that fleck
My one window, hurries on,
Throws its arms around my neck.

Darkness to my doorway hies,
Lays her chin upon the roof,
And her burning seraph eyes
Now no longer keep aloof.

And the ancient mystery
Holds its hands out day by day,
Takes a chair and croons with me
By my cabin built of clay.

When the dusky shadow flits,
By the chimney nook I see
Where the old enchanter sits,
Smiles and waves and beckons me. (1894)

### OVERSOUL

I am Beauty itself among beautiful things.
— *Bhagavad-Gita.*

The East was crowned with snow-cold bloom
And hung with veils of pearly fleece;
They died away into the gloom,
Vistas of peace — and deeper peace.

And earth and air and wave and fire
In awe and breathless silence stood;
For One who passed into their choir
Linked them in mystic brotherhood.

Twilight of amethyst, amid
Thy few strange stars that lit the heights,
Where was the secret spirit hid?
Where was Thy place, O Light of Lights?

The flame of Beauty far in space —
Where rose the fire: in Thee? in Me?
Which bowed the elemental race
To adoration silently? (1894)

### INHERITANCE

As flow the rivers to the sea
Adown from rocky hill or plain,
A thousand ages toiled for thee

---

*The poems of George William Russell are reprinted from his *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

"**A. E.**," Russell's pen-name, an abbreviation of Æon (age, eternity), the name which Russell used in signing early work.

15. **seraph.** A seraph is one of an order of heavenly beings regarded as fiery and purifying ministers of Jehovah.

*Oversoul.* The oversoul is the divine personality, perfect Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. According to the pantheistic or transcendental philosophy, the oversoul is the whole of which individual souls are parts; hence all created things partake of the divine nature. A man may therefore come to understand from observation of his own mind and of external nature something of what constitutes perfect Beauty and perfect Truth, since God is in the dawn and twilight as well as in the mind of man. This conception is to be found in Platonic and in Oriental philosophy, as well as in the poetry of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Emerson. Cf. *Unity* and *Reconciliation*, pages 923, 924, and Browning's "*Transcendentalism*," page 255. See also Emerson's essay entitled *The Over-Soul*.

**Bhagavad-Gita**, "the song of the holy one": a philosophic episode, expounding Brahmanic philosophy, in the *Mahabharata*, a Hindu epic. The deity Krishna is the speaker.

5. **earth . . . fire**, the four elements of which the universe is composed. 7. **One**, the divine spirit which makes harmony out of naturally discordant elements.

And gave thee harvest of their gain;
And weary myriads of yore
Dug out for thee earth's buried ore.

The shadowy toilers for thee fought
In chaos of primeval day
Blind battles with they knew not what;
And each before he passed away
Gave clear articulate cries of woe —
Your pain is theirs of long ago.

And all the old heart sweetness sung,
The joyous life of man and maid
In forests when the earth was young,
In rumors round your childhood strayed,
The careless sweetness of your mind
Comes from the buried years behind.

And not alone unto your birth
Their gifts the weeping ages bore,
The old descents of God on earth
Have dowered thee with celestial lore;
So, wise, and filled with sad and gay
You pass into the further day.

(1894)

## UNITY

One thing in all things have I seen;
One thought has haunted earth and air;
Clangor and silence both have been
Its palace chambers. Everywhere

I saw the mystic vision flow
And live in men and woods and streams,
Until I could no longer know
The dream of life from my own dreams.

Sometimes it rose like fire in me
Within the depths of my own mind,
And spreading to infinity,
It took the voices of the wind;

It scrawled the human mystery —
Dim heraldry — on light and air;
Wavering along the starry sea
I saw the flying vision there.

Each fire that in God's temple lit
Burns fierce before the inner shrine,
Dimmed as my fire grew near to it
And darkened at the light of mine.

At last, at last, the meaning caught —
The Spirit wears its diadem;
It shakes its wondrous plumes of thought
And trails the stars along with them.

(1894)

## THE MEMORY OF EARTH

In the wet dusk silver-sweet,
Down the violet-scented ways,
As I moved with quiet feet
I was met by mighty days.

On the hedge the hanging dew
Glassed the eve and stars and skies;
While I gazed a madness grew
Into thundered battle cries.

Where the hawthorn glimmered white,
Flashed the spear and fell the stroke —
Ah, what faces pale and bright
Where the dazzling battle broke!

There a hero-hearted queen
With young beauty lit the van;
Gone! the darkness flowed between
All the ancient wars of man.

While I paced the valley's gloom
Where the rabbits pattered near,
Shone a temple and a tomb
With a legend carven clear:

*"Time put by a myriad fates*
*That her day might dawn in glory;*
*Death made wide a million gates*
*So to close her tragic story."* (1897)

## PARTING

As from our dream we died away
Far off I felt the outer things;
Your wind-blown tresses round me play,
Your bosom's gentle murmurings.

And far away our faces met
As on the verge of the vast spheres;
And in the night our cheeks were wet,
I could not say with dew or tears.

O gate by which I entered in!
O face and hair! O lips and eyes!
Through you again the world I win,
How far away from Paradise! (1897)

## CONTINUITY

No sign is made while empires pass.
The flowers and stars are still His care,
The constellations hid in grass,
The golden miracles in air.

Life in an instant will be rent
Where death is glittering blind and wild —
The Heavenly Brooding is intent
To that last instant on Its child.

It breathes the glow in brain and heart,
Life is made magical. Until
Body and spirit are apart
The Everlasting works Its will.

In that wild orchid that your feet
In their next falling shall destroy,
Minute and passionate and sweet
The Mighty Master holds His joy.

Though the crushed jewels droop and fade
The Artist's labors will not cease,
And of the ruins shall be made
Some yet more lovely masterpiece. (1897)

### RECONCILIATION

I begin through the grass once again to be bound to the Lord;
I can see, through a face that has faded, the face full of rest
Of the earth, of the mother, my heart with her heart in accord,
As I lie 'mid the cool green tresses that mantle her breast.
I begin with the grass once again to be bound to the Lord.

By the hand of a child I am led to the throne of the King,
For a touch that now fevers me not is forgotten and far,
And His infinite sceptered hands that sway us can bring
Me in dreams from the laugh of a child to the song of a star.
On the laugh of a child I am borne to the joy of the King. (1904)

## SIR HENRY NEWBOLT (1862- )

### DRAKE'S DRUM

Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand mile away
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot in Nombre Dios Bay,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Yarnder lumes the Island, yarnder lie the ships,
Wi' sailor lads a-dancin' heel-an'-toe,
An' the shore-lights flashin', an' the night-tide dashin',
He sees et arl so plainly as he saw et long ago.

Drake he was a Devon man, an' ruled the Devon seas
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Rovin' tho' his death fell, he went wi' heart at ease,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
"Take my drum to England, hang et by the shore,
Strike et when your powder's runnin' low;
If the Dons sight Devon, I'll quit the port o' Heaven,
An' drum them up the Channel as we drummed them long ago."

Drake he's in his hammock till the great Armadas come
(Capten, art tha sleepin' there below?),
Slung atween the round shot, listenin' for the drum,
An' dreamin' arl the time o' Plymouth Hoe.
Call him on the deep sea, call him up the Sound,
Call him when ye sail to meet the foe;
Where the old trade's plyin' an' the old flag flyin'
They shall find him ware an' wakin', as they found him long ago!
(1897)

### VITAÏ LAMPADA

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night —
Ten to make and the match to win —
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,

---

*Drake's Drum.* "A State drum, painted with the arms of Sir Francis Drake, is preserved among other relics at Buckland Abbey, the seat of the Drake family in Devon" (Newbolt's note). Sir Francis Drake (c. 1545-1596) was born near Tavistock in Devonshire; he made several daring voyages into the new world, sailed around the globe, and was second in command of the English fleet that defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588. The legend here related corresponds to those told of King Arthur, Frederick Barbarossa, and other national heroes; each, it is said, will return to aid his country in the hour of peril. The poem is written in Devonshire dialect.

1-3. **hammock . . . round shot.** A sailor who dies at sea is tied in his hammock with shot at his head and feet and so buried. Drake was buried in Nombre Dios Bay, in the West Indies, but according to the record a lead coffin was used.

4. **Plymouth Hoe,** the elevation above the harbor of Plymouth, principal seaport on the east coast of Devon; here Drake was playing at bowls when word was brought to him that the Armada had been sighted. 5. **the Island,** a small island off Plymouth, known today as Drake's Island. 15. **Dons,** Spaniards. 17. **Armadas,** the war-fleets of alien nations bent on invading England. 23. **old trade,** fighting England's enemies.

*Vitaï Lampada.* The title means *The Torch of Life;* it is taken from Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura,* 2:77.—"Some nations increase, others diminish, and in a short time the generations of living creatures are changed and like runners [in a relay race] pass on the torch of life."

1. **Close,** the athletic field of Clifton College near Bristol, where Newbolt was educated. 3. **bumping pitch,** uneven ground between the wickets in the game of cricket.

But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote —
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red —
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honor a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind —
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

(1897)

## HE FELL AMONG THIEVES

"Ye have robbed," said he, "ye have slaughtered and made an end;
Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead.
What will ye more of your guest and sometime friend?"
"Blood for our blood," they said.

He laughed: "If one may settle the score for five,
I am ready; but let the reckoning stand till day —
I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive."
"You shall die at dawn," said they.

He flung his empty revolver down the slope,
He climbed alone to the eastward edge of the trees;
All night long in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, clasping his knees.

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine where the Yassin River sullenly flows;
He did not see the starlight on the Laspur hills,
Or the far Afghan snows.

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,
The wistaria trailing in at the window wide;
He heard his father's voice from the terrace below
Calling him down to ride.

He saw the gray little church across the park,
The mounds that hid the loved and honored dead;
The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,
The brasses black and red.

He saw the school close, sunny and green,
The runner beside him, the stand by the parapet wall,
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between,
His own name over all.

He saw the dark wainscot and timbered roof,
The long tables, and the faces merry and keen;
The college eight and their trainer dining aloof,
The dons on the daïs serene.

He watched the liner's stem plowing the foam,
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her screw;
He heard the passengers' voices talking of home,
He saw the flag she flew.

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,
And strode to his ruined camp below the woods;
He drank the breath of the morning cool and sweet;
His murderers round him stood.

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,
The blood-red snow-peaks chilled to a dazzling white;
He turned and saw the golden circle at last,
Cut by the eastern height.

"O glorious Life, Who dwellest in earth and sun,
I have lived, I praise and adore thee." A sword swept.
Over the pass the voices one by one
Faded, and the hill slept.

(1897)

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11. **Gatling,** an early type of machine gun, named after its American inventor.

*He Fell among Thieves.* See the parable of the Good Samaritan, *Luke*, 10-30-37.—"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him . . ." The thieves in this ballad are the savage tribesmen of the Gilgit district on the Kashmir borderland in northern India; until recent years but few Europeans have safely entered this rugged and inhospitable country.

14. **Yassin River,** a principal river in the Gilgit district.

15. **Laspur hills,** a spur of the Himalaya chain. 24. **brasses . . . red,** memorial tablets, often enameled in colors. 25. **close,** athletic field attached to a public school. 32. **dons on the daïs,** instructors at the high table on a platform at one end of the dining hall.

## CLIFTON CHAPEL

This is the Chapel: here, my son,
Your father thought the thoughts of youth,
And heard the words that one by one
The touch of Life has turned to truth.
Here in a day that is not far,
You too may speak with noble ghosts
Of manhood and the vows of war
You made before the Lord of Hosts.

To set the Cause above renown,
To love the game beyond the prize,
To honor, while you strike him down,
The foe that comes with fearless eyes;
To count the life of battle good,
And dear the land that gave you birth,
And dearer yet the brotherhood
That binds the brave of all the earth. —

My son, the oath is yours; the end
Is His who built the world of strife,
Who gave His children Pain for friend,
And Death for surest hope of life.
Today and here the fight's begun,
Of the great fellowship you're free;
Henceforth the School and you are one,
And what You are, the race shall be.

God send you fortune; yet be sure,
Among the lights that gleam and pass,
You'll live to follow none more pure
Than that which glows on yonder brass:
"*Qui procul hinc*," the legend's writ —
The frontier-grave is far away —
"*Qui ante diem periit:*
*Sed miles, sed pro patria.*"

(1898)

## THE VIGIL

England! where the sacred flame
Burns before the inmost shrine,
Where lips that love thy name
Consecrate their hopes and thine,
Where the banners of thy dead
Weave their shadows overhead,
Watch beside thine arms tonight,
Pray that God defend the Right.

Think that when tomorrow comes
War shall claim command of all,
Thou must hear the roll of drums,
Thou must hear the trumpet's call.
Now before they silence ruth,
Commune with the voice of truth;
England! on thy knees tonight
Pray that God defend the Right.

Hast thou counted up the cost,
What to foeman, what to friend?
Glory sought is Honor lost,
How should this be knighthood's end?
Know'st thou what is Hatred's meed?
What the surest gain of Greed?
England! wilt thou dare tonight
Pray that God defend the Right?

Single-hearted, unafraid,
Hither all thy heroes came,
On this altar's steps were laid
Gordon's life and Outram's fame.
England! If thou will be yet
By their great example set,
Here beside thine arms tonight
Pray that God defend the Right.

So shalt thou when morning comes
Rise to conquer or to fall,
Joyful hear the rolling drums,
Joyful hear the trumpet's call.
Then let Memory tell thy heart;
"*England! what thou wert, thou art!*"
Gird thee with thine ancient might,
Forth! and God defend the Right!

(1898)

## COMMEMORATION

I sat by the granite pillar, and sunlight fell
Where the sunlight fell of old,
And the hour was the hour my heart remembered well,
And the sermon rolled and rolled
As it used to roll when the place was still unhaunted,
And the strangest tale in the world was still untold.

And I knew that of all this rushing of urgent sound
That I so clearly heard,
The green young forest of saplings clustered round
Was heeding not one word;

---

**Clifton Chapel**, the chapel of Clifton College, a "public" (preparatory) school with about 650 students near Bristol, Gloucestershire, England; the school, founded in 1862, is noteworthy for having graduated the late Earl Haig and a number of other high officers of the British army. "Thirty-five Old Cliftonian officers served in the campaign of 1897 on the Indian Frontier, of whom twenty-two were mentioned in dispatches, and six recommended for the Distinguished Service Order. Of the three hundred Cliftonians who served in the war in South Africa, thirty were killed in action and fourteen died of wounds or fever" (Newbolt's note).

29-32. **Qui . . . hinc . . . Qui . . . patria.** "He is far from hence, who perished before his day; but he was a soldier, he died for his country." The inscription as Newbolt gives it is a kind of epitome of two or three brasses in the Chapel which express something of the same sort.

*The Vigil.* Cf. Kipling's *Recessional*, page 893.

28. **Gordon.** General Charles Gordon was killed at Khartum, 1885, in warfare with the Soudanese; see Kipling's "*Fuzzy-Wuzzy*," page 881. **Outram.** General James Outram, called "the Bayard of India," performed brilliant exploits in Persia and in India during the Sepoy Rebellion, 1857; shattered in health, he returned to England and died in 1863.

Their heads were bowed in a still serried patience
Such as an angel's breath could never have stirred.

For some were already away to the hazardous pitch,
Or lining the parapet wall,
And some were in glorious battle, or great and rich,
Or throned in a college hall;
And among the rest was one like my own young phantom,
Dreaming forever beyond my utmost call.

"O Youth," the preacher was crying, "deem not thou
Thy life is thine alone;
Thou bearest the will of the ages, seeing how
They built thee bone by bone,
And within thy blood the Great Age sleeps sepulchered
Till thou and thine shall roll away the stone.

"Therefore the days are coming when thou shalt burn
With passion whitely hot;
Rest shall be rest no more; thy feet shall spurn
All that thy hand hath got;
And One that is stronger shall gird thee, and lead thee swiftly
Whither, O heart of Youth, thou wouldest not."

And the School passed; and I saw the living and dead
Set in their seats again,
And I longed to hear them speak of the word that was said,
But I knew that I longed in vain.
And they stretched forth their hands, and the wind of the spirit took them
Lightly as drifted leaves on an endless plain.
(1902)

## THE ADVENTURERS

Over the downs in sunlight clear
Forth we went in the spring of the year;
Plunder of April's gold we sought,
Little of April's anger thought.

Caught in a copse without defense,
Low we crouched to the rain-squall dense;
Sure, if misery man can vex,
There it beat on our bended necks.

Yet when again we wander on
Suddenly all that gloom is gone;
Under and over through the wood,
Life is astir, and life is good.

Violets purple, violets white,
Delicate windflowers dancing light,
Primrose, mercury, moscatel,
Shimmer in diamonds round the dell.

Squirrel is climbing swift and lithe,
Chiff-chaff whetting his airy scythe,
Woodpecker whirrs his rattling rap,
Ringdove flies with a sudden clap.

Rook is summoning rook to build,
Dunnock his beak with moss has filled,
Robin is bowing in coat-tails brown,
Tomtit chattering upside down.

Well is it seen that everyone
Laughs at the rain and loves the sun;
We too laughed with the wildwood crew,
Laughed till the sky once more was blue.

Homeward over the downs we went
Soaked to the heart with sweet content;
April's anger is swift to fall,
April's wonder is worth it all.
(1909)

## THOMAS HARDY

(1840-1928)

### HEIRESS AND ARCHITECT

FOR A. W. BLOMFIELD

She sought the Studios, beckoning to her side
An arch-designer, for she planned to build.
He was of wise contrivance, deeply skilled
In every intervolve of high and wide —
Well fit to be her guide.

"Whatever it be,"
Responded he,
With cold, clear voice, and cold, clear view,
"In true accord with prudent fashionings
For such vicissitudes as living brings,
And thwarting not the law of stable things,
That will I do."

"Shape me," she said, "high halls with tracery
And open ogive-work, that scent and hue

---

*The Adventurers.* 1. **downs**, tracts of open upland.

14. **windflowers**, anemones. 15. **mercury, moscatel**, European plants. 22. **Dunnock**, hedge-sparrow.

*Heiress and Architect.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Wessex Poems and other Verses* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

**A. W. Blomfield** (1829-1899), an architect, Hardy's first employer and lifelong friend.

4. **intervolve . . . wide**, the interaction of height and width in the construction of buildings. 14. **ogive-work**, archways.

Of buds, and traveling bees, may come in through,
The note of birds, and singing of the sea,
For these are much to me."

"An idle whim!"
Broke forth from him
Whom naught could warm to gallantries;
"Cede all these buds and birds, the zephyr's call,
And scents, and hues, and things that falter all,
And choose as best the close and surly wall,
For winters freeze."

"Then frame," she cried, "wide fronts of crystal glass,
That I may show my laughter and my light —
Light like the sun's by day, the stars' by night —
Till rival heart-queens, envying, wail, 'Alas,
Her glory!' as they pass."

"O maid misled!"
He sternly said
Whose facile foresight pierced her dire;
"Where shall abide the soul when, sick of glee,
It shrinks, and hides, and prays no eye may see?
Those house them best who house for secrecy,
For you will tire."

"A little chamber, then, with swan and dove
Ranged thickly, and engrailed with rare device
Of reds and purples, for a Paradise
Wherein my Love greets me, I my Love,
When he shall know thereof?"

"This, too, is ill,"
He answered still,
The man who swayed her like a shade.
"An hour will come when sight of such sweet nook
Would bring a bitterness too sharp to brook,
When brighter eyes have won away his look,
For you will fade."

Then said she faintly: "Oh, contrive some way —
Some narrow winding turret, quite mine own,
To reach a loft where I may grieve alone!
It is a slight thing; hence do not, I pray,
This last dear fancy slay!"

"Such winding ways
Fit not your days,"
Said he, the man of measuring eye;
"I must even fashion as the rule declares,
To wit: Give space (since life ends unawares)
To hale a coffined corpse adown the stairs;
For you will die."

(*1867;* 1898)

## "WHEN I SET OUT FOR LYONNESSE"

When I set out for Lyonnesse,
A hundred miles away,
The rime was on the spray,
And starlight lit my lonesomeness
When I set out for Lyonnesse
A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonnesse
While I should sojourn there
No prophet durst declare,
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonnesse
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonnesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surmise
My radiance rare and fathomless,
When I came back from Lyonnesse
With magic in my eyes!

(*1870;* 1914)

## SHELLEY'S SKYLARK

(*The neighbourhood of Leghorn: March, 1887*)

Somewhere afield here something lies
In Earth's oblivious eyeless trust
That moved a poet to prophecies —
A pinch of unseen, unguarded dust;

The dust of the lark that Shelley heard,
And made immortal through times to be —
Though it only lived like another bird,
And knew not its immortality;

Lived its meek life; then, one day, fell —
A little ball of feather and bone;

---

21. **Cede,** abandon the thought of. 22. **falter,** prove transitory. 38. **engrailed,** furnished with a border-design of notched or wavy lines.

*"When I Set Out for Lyonnesse."* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

The poem records a visit made to St. Juliot Rectory in Cornwall, March, 1870, when Hardy first met Emma Gifford, who became the first Mrs. Hardy. Lyonnesse, in the Arthurian romances, is an indefinite region in Cornwall. See note on Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur,* 4, page 38.

*Shelley's Skylark.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Poems of the Past and the Present* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

Shelley's ode *To a Skylark* was written in Leghorn, on the northwest coast of Italy, in 1820.

3. **prophecies.** The last stanza of *To a Skylark* is:

"Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then—as I am listening now."

And how it perished, when piped farewell,
And where it wastes, are alike unknown.

Maybe it rests in the loam I view,
Maybe it throbs in a myrtle's green,
Maybe it sleeps in the coming hue
Of a grape on the slopes of yon inland scene.

Go find it, faeries, go and find
That tiny pinch of priceless dust,
And bring a casket silver-lined,
And framed of gold that gems encrust;

And we will lay it safe therein,
And consecrate it to endless time;
For it inspired a bard to win
Ecstatic heights in thought and rime.
(*1887;* 1902)

## A BEAUTY'S SOLILOQUY DURING HER HONEYMOON

Too late, too late! I did not know my fairness
Would catch the world's keen eyes so!
How the men look at me! My radiant rareness
I deemed not they would prize so!

That I was a peach for any man's possession
Why did not some one say
Before I leased myself in an hour's obsession
To this dull mate for aye!

His days are mine. I am one who cannot steal her
Ahead of his plodding pace—
As he is, so am I. One doomed to feel her
A wasted form and face!

I was so blind! It did sometimes just strike me
All girls were not as I,
But, dwelling much alone, how few were like me
I could not well descry;

Till, at this Grand Hotel, all looks bend on me
In homage as I pass
To take my seat at breakfast, dinner,—con me
As poorly spoused, alas!

I was too young. I dwelt too much on duty;
If I had guessed my powers
Where might have sailed this cargo of choice beauty
In its unanchored hours!

Well, husband, poor plain man; I've lost life's battle!—
Come—let them look at me.
O damn, don't show in your looks that I'm your chattel
Quite so emphatically!
(*1892;* 1922)

## HER DEATH AND AFTER

The summons was urgent; and forth I went—
By the way of the Western Wall, so drear
On that winter night, and sought a gate,
Where one, by Fate,
Lay dying that I held dear.

And there, as I paused by her tenement,
And the trees shed on me their rime and hoar,
I thought of the man who had left her lone—
Him who made her his own
When I loved her, long before.

The rooms within had the piteous shine
That home-things wear when there's aught amiss;
From the stairway floated the rise and fall
Of an infant's call,
Whose birth had brought her to this.

Her life was the price she would pay for that whine—
For a child by the man she did not love.
"But let that rest forever," I said,
And bent my tread
To the bedchamber above.

She took my hand in her thin white own,
And smiled her thanks—though nigh too weak—
And made them a sign to leave us there,
Then faltered, ere
She could bring herself to speak.

"Just to see you—before I go—he'll condone
Such a natural thing now my time's not much—
When Death is so near it hustles hence
All passioned sense
Between woman and man as such!

"My husband is absent. As heretofore
The City detains him. But, in truth,
He has not been kind. . . . I will speak no blame,

---

*A Beauty's Soliloquy during Her Honeymoon.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

*Her Death and After.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Wessex Poems and Other Verses* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy. 2. **Western Wall**, a street on the outskirts of Dorchester, southern England, on the site of a Roman wall. 32. **City**, the financial district of London.

But — the child is lame;
Oh, I pray she may reach his ruth!

"Forgive past days — I can say no more —
Maybe had we wed you would now repine! . . .
But I treated you ill. I was punished. Farewell!
— Truth shall I tell?
Would the child were yours and mine!

"As a wife I was true. But, such my unease
That, could I insert a deed back in Time,
I'd make her yours, to secure your care;
And the scandal bear,
And the penalty for the crime!"

— When I had left, and the swinging trees
Rang above me, as lauding her candid say,
Another was I. Her words were enough—
Came smooth, came rough,
I felt I could live my day.

Next night she died; and her obsequies
In the Field of Tombs where the earthworks frowned
Had her husband's heed. His tendance spent,
I often went
And pondered by her mound.

All that year and the next year whiled,
And I still went thitherward in the gloam;
But the Town forgot her and her nook,
And her husband took
Another Love to his home.

And the rumor flew that the lame lone child
Whom she wished for its safety child of mine,
Was treated ill when offspring came
Of the new-made dame,
And marked a more vigorous line.

A smarter grief within me wrought
Than even at loss of her so dear
That the being whose soul my soul suffused
Had a child ill-used,
While I dared not interfere!

One eve as I stood at my spot of thought
In the white-stoned Garth, brooding thus her wrong,
Her husband neared; and to shun his nod
By her hallowed sod
I went from the tombs among

To the Cirque of the Gladiators which faced —
That haggard mark of Imperial Rome,
Whose Pagan echoes mock the chime
Of our Christian time
From its hollows of chalk and loam.

The sun's gold touch was scarce displaced
From the vast Arena where men once bled,
When her husband followed; bowed, half-passed
With lip upcast;
Then halting sullenly said:

"It is noised that you visit my first wife's tomb.
Now, I gave her an honored name to bear
While living, when dead. So I've claim to ask
By what right you task
My patience by vigiling there?

"There's decency even in death, I assume;
Preserve it, sir, and keep away;
For the mother of my first-born you
Show mind undue!
— Sir, I've nothing more to say."

A desperate stroke discerned I then —
God pardon — or pardon not — the lie;
She had sighed that she wished (lest the child should pine
Of slights) 'twere mine,
So I said: "But the father I.

"That you thought it yours is the way of men;
But I won her troth long ere your day.
You learned how, in dying, she summoned me?
'Twas in fealty.
— Sir, I've nothing more to say,

"Save that, if you'll hand me my little maid,
I'll take her, and rear her, and spare you toil.
Think it more than a friendly act none can;
I'm a lonely man,
While you've a large pot to boil.

"If not, and you'll put it to ball or blade —
Tonight, tomorrow night, anywhen —
I'll meet you here . . . But think of it,
And in season fit
Let me hear from you again."

— Well, I went away, hoping; but naught I heard

---

52. **Field of Tombs**, a cemetery on the southern outskirts of Dorchester. 72. **Garth**, a piece of enclosed ground; here, the cemetery.

76. **Cirque . . . Gladiators**, Maumbury Ring, the remains of an ancient Roman amphitheater, near the cemetery in Dorchester. 111. **put . . . blade**, fight a duel with pistol or sword.

Of my stroke for the child, till there greeted me
A little voice that one day came
To my window-frame
And babbled innocently:

"My father who's not my own, sends word
I'm to stay here, sir, where I belong!"
Next a writing came: "Since the child was the fruit
Of your lawless suit,
Pray take her, to right a wrong."

And I did. And I gave the child my love,
And the child loved me, and estranged us none.
But compunctions loomed; for I'd harmed the dead
By what I said
For the good of the living one.

— Yet though, God wot, I am sinner enough,
And unworthy the woman who drew me so,
Perhaps this wrong for her darling's good
She forgives, or would,
If only she could know!

(1898)

## FRIENDS BEYOND

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plow,
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, lie in Mellstock churchyard now!

"Gone," I call them, gone for good, that group of local hearts and heads;
Yet at mothy curfew-tide,
And at midnight when the noon-heat breathes it back from walls and leads,

They've a way of whispering to me — fellow-wight who yet abide —
In the muted, measured note
Of a ripple under archways, or a lone cave's stillicide:

"We have triumphed; this achievement turns the bane to antidote,
Unsuccesses to success,
Many thought-worn eves and morrows to a morrow free of thought.

"No more need we corn and clothing, feel of old terrestrial stress;
Chill detraction stirs no sigh;
Fear of death has even bygone us — death gave all that we possess."

*W. D.* — "Ye mid burn the old bass-viol that I set such value by."
*Squire.* — "You may hold the manse in fee,
You may wed my spouse, may let my children's memory of me die."

*Lady S.* — "You may have my rich brocades, my laces; take each household key;
Ransack Coffer, desk, bureau;
Quiz the few poor treasures hid there, con the letters kept by me."

*Far.* — "Ye mid zell my favorite heifer, ye mid let the charlock grow,
Foul the grinterns, give up thrift."
*Far. Wife.* — "If ye break my best blue china, children, I shan't care or ho."

*All.* — "We've no wish to hear the tidings, how the people's fortunes shift;
What your daily doings are;
Who are wedded, born, divided; if your lives beat slow or swift.

"Curious not the least are we if our intents you make or mar,
If you quire to our old tune,
If the City stage still passes, if the weirs still roar afar."

— Thus, with very gods' composure, freed those crosses late and soon
Which in life, the Trine allow
(Why, none witteth), and ignoring all that haps beneath the moon,

William Dewy, Tranter Reuben, Farmer Ledlow late at plow,
Robert's kin, and John's, and Ned's,
And the Squire, and Lady Susan, murmur mildly to me now.

(1898)

## DRUMMER HODGE

They throw in Drummer Hodge, to rest
Uncoffined — just as found:
His landmark is a kopje-crest

---

131. **wot,** knows.

*Friends Beyond.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Wessex Poems and Other Verses* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

1. **Tranter.** A tranter is a carrier. 3. **Mellstock,** Hardy's name for Stinsford, a village northeast of Dorchester, Dorsetshire, England. 6. **leads,** the lead covering of roofs. 9. **stillicide,** continual dropping of water. 16. **mid,** may. 17. **hold . . . fee,** buy my house. 22. **charlock,** wild mustard. 23. **grinterns,** compartments in a granary. 24. **ho,** fuss (Dorset dialect). 30. **weirs,** dams. 32. **Trine,** the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*Drummer Hodge.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Poems of the Past and the Present* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

The background of the poem is the Boer War, fought in South Africa, 1899-1902, between the English and the Dutch settlers.

3. **kopje-crest,** the top of a hillock.

That breaks the veldt around;
And foreign constellations west
Each night above his mound.

Young Hodge the Drummer never knew —
Fresh from his Wessex home —
The meaning of the broad Karoo,
The Bush, the dusty loam,
And why uprose to nightly view
Strange stars amid the gloam.

Yet portion of that unknown plain
Will Hodge forever be;
His homely Northern breast and brain
Grow to some Southern tree,
And strange-eyed constellations reign
His stars eternally.
(1899)

## THE SOULS OF THE SLAIN

The thick lids of Night closed upon me
Alone at the Bill
Of the Isle by the Race —
Many-caverned, bald, wrinkled of face
And with darkness and silence the spirit was on me
To brood and be still.

No wind fanned the flats of the ocean,
Or promontory sides,
Or the ooze by the strand,
Or the bent-bearded slope of the land,
Whose base took its rest mid everlong motion
Of criss-crossing tides.

Soon from out of the southward seemed nearing
A whirr, as of wings
Waved by mighty-vanned flies,
Or by night-moths of measureless size,
And in softness and smoothness wellnigh beyond hearing
Of corporal things.

And they bore to the bluff, and alighted —
A dim-discerned train
Of sprites without mold,
Frameless souls none might touch or might hold —
On the ledge by the turreted lantern, far-sighted
By men of the main.

And I heard them say "Home!" and I knew them
For souls of the felled
On the earth's nether bord
Under Capricorn, whither they'd warred,
And I neared in my awe, and gave heedfulness to them
With breathings inheld.

Then, it seemed, there approached from the northward
A senior soul-flame
Of the like filmy hue;
And he met them and spake: "Is it you,
O my men?" Said they, "Aye! We bear homeward and hearthward
To feast on our fame!"

"I've flown there before you," he said then.
"Your households are well;
But — your kin linger less
On your glory and war-mightiness
Than on dearer things." — "Dearer?" cried these from the dead then,
"Of what do they tell?"

"Some mothers muse sadly, and murmur
Your doings as boys —
Recall the quaint ways
Of your babyhood's innocent days.
Some pray that, ere dying, your faith had grown firmer,
And higher your joys.

"A father broods: 'Would I had set him
To some humble trade,
And so slacked his high fire,
And his passionate martial desire;
Had told him no stories to woo him and whet him
To this dire crusade!' "

"And, General, how hold out our sweethearts,
Sworn loyal as doves?"
— "Many mourn; many think
It is not unattractive to prink
Them in sables for heroes. Some fickle and fleet hearts
Have found them new loves."

"And our wives?" quoth another resignedly,
"Dwell they on our deeds?"

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4. **veldt,** the South-African prairie. 5. **west,** set in the west. 8. **Wessex.** Originally a Saxon kingdom comprising the part of England south of the Thames, Wessex, as Hardy uses the term, corresponds to the county of Dorset. 9. **Karoo,** a desert plateau in South Africa. 10. **Bush,** areas covered with scrubby growth.

*The Souls of the Slain.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Poems of the Past and the Present* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

1. **lids . . . Night;** cf. *Before Waterloo,* 1, page 937. 2-3. **Bill . . . Race.** The Isle of Portland extends into the English Channel near Weymouth on the Dorset coast; at its southern extremity are Portland Bill, a rocky promontory, and Portland Race, a dangerous channel with swift tides. Cf. Housman's *Shropshire Lad,* Lyric 59, page 920. 10. **bent-bearded,** covered with bent, a stiff grass. 15. **vanned,** winged.

23. **lantern,** lighthouse. 27. **earth's nether bord,** the other side of the earth. 28. **Under Capricorn,** south of the Tropic of Capricorn—that is, in South Africa, where the Boer War was fought, 1899-1902.

— "Deeds of home; that live yet
Fresh as new — deeds of fondness or fret;
Ancient words that were kindly expressed or unkindly,
These, these have their heeds."

— "Alas! then it seems that our glory
Weighs less in their thought
Than our old homely acts,
And the long-ago commonplace facts
Of our lives — held by us as scarce part of our story,
And rated as naught!"

Then bitterly some: "Was it wise now
To raise the tomb-door
For such knowledge? Away!"
But the rest: "Fame we prized till today;
Yet that hearts keep us green for old kindness we prize now
A thousand times more!"

Thus speaking, the trooped apparitions
Began to disband
And resolve them in two:
Those whose record was lovely and true
Bore to northward for home; those of bitter traditions
Again left the land,

And, towering to seaward in legions,
They paused at a spot
Overbending the Race —
That engulfing, ghast, sinister place —
Whither headlong they plunged, to the fathomless regions
Of myriads forgot.

And the spirits of those who were homing
Passed on, rushingly,
Like the Pentecost Wind;
And the whirr of their wayfaring thinned
And surceased on the sky, and but left in the gloaming
Sea-mutterings and me. (*1899;* 1900)

## THE DARKLING THRUSH

I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was specter-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted nigh
Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be
The Century's corpse outleant,
His crypt the cloudy canopy,
The wind his death-lament.
The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervorless as I.

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings
Of such ecstatic sound
Was written on terrestrial things
Afar or nigh around,
That I could think there trembled through
His happy good-night air
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
And I was unaware. (*1900;* 1900)

## AUTUMN IN KING'S HINTOCK PARK

Here by the baring bough
Raking up leaves,
Often I ponder how
Springtime deceives —
I, an old woman now,
Raking up leaves.

Here in the avenue
Raking up leaves,
Lords' ladies pass in view,
Until one heaves
Sighs at life's russet hue,
Raking up leaves!

Just as my shape you see
Raking up leaves,
I saw, when fresh and free,
Those memory weaves
Into gray ghosts by me,
Raking up leaves.

Yet, Dear, though one may sigh,
Raking up leaves,
New leaves will dance on high —
Earth never grieves! —
Will not, when missed am I
Raking up leaves. (*1901;* 1909)

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93. **Pentecost Wind.** From *Acts,* 2:2.—"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind."

*The Darkling Thrush.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Poems of the Past and the Present* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

1. **coppice,** thicket. 5. **bine,** a climbing plant.

10. **Century's corpse,** the recently ended 19th century.

*Autumn in King's Hintock Park.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

King's Hintock is Hardy's name for Melbury Sampford, north of Dorchester in Dorsetshire.

## GOD-FORGOTTEN

I towered far, and lo! I stood within
The presence of the Lord Most High,
Sent thither by the sons of earth, to win
Some answer to their cry.

— "The Earth, sayest thou? The Human race?
By Me created? Sad its lot?
Nay; I have no remembrance of such place—
Such world I fashioned not." —

— "O Lord, forgive me when I say
Thou spakest the word that made it all." —
"The Earth of men — let me bethink me. . . . Yea!
I dimly do recall

"Some tiny sphere I built long back
(Mid millions of such shapes of mine)
So named . . . It perished, surely — not a wrack
Remaining, or a sign?

"It lost my interest from the first,
My aims therefor succeeding ill;
Haply it dies of doing as it durst?" —
"Lord, it existeth still." —

"Dark, then, its life! For not a cry
Of aught it bears do I now hear;
Of its own act the threads were snapt whereby
Its plaints had reached mine ear.

"It used to ask for gifts of good,
Till came its severance, self-entailed,
When sudden silence on that side ensued,
And has till now prevailed.

"All other orbs have kept in touch;
Their voicings reach me speedily.
Thy people took upon them overmuch
In sundering them from me!

"And it is strange — though sad enough —
Earth's race should think that one whose call
Frames, daily, shining spheres of flawless stuff
Must heed their tainted ball! . . .

"But sayest it is by pangs distraught,
And strife, and silent suffering? —
Sore grieved am I that injury should be wrought
Even on so poor a thing!

"Thou should'st have learnt that *Not to Mend*
For Me could mean but *Not to Know*.
Hence, Messengers! and straightway put an end
To what men undergo." . . .

Homing at dawn, I thought to see
One of the Messengers standing by.
— Oh, childish thought! . . . Yet often it comes to me
When trouble hovers nigh.

(1902)

## THE LAST CHRYSANTHEMUM

Why should this flower delay so long
To show its tremulous plumes?
Now is the time of plaintive robin-song,
When flowers are in their tombs.

Through the slow summer, when the sun
Called to each frond and whorl
That all he could for flowers was being done,
Why did it not uncurl?

It must have felt that fervid call
Although it took no heed,
Waking but now, when leaves like corpses fall,
And saps all retrocede.

Too late its beauty, lonely thing,
The season's shine is spent,
Nothing remains for it but shivering
In tempests turbulent.

Had it a reason for delay,
Dreaming in witlessness
That for a bloom so delicately gay
Winter would stay its stress?

— I talk as if the thing were born
With sense to work its mind;
Yet it is but one mask of many worn
By the Great Face behind.

(1902)

## THE TO-BE-FORGOTTEN

I heard a small sad sound,
And stood awhile among the tombs around.
"Wherefore, old friends," said I, "are you distrest,
Now, screened from life's unrest?"

*God-Forgotten.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Poems of the Past and the Present* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

*The Last Chrysanthemum.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Poems of the Past and the Present* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

12. retrocede, go down the stalk.

*The To-Be-Forgotten.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Poems of the Past and the Present* by permission of Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

— "Oh, not at being here;
But that our future second death is near;
When, with the living, memory of us numbs,
And blank oblivion comes!

"These, our sped ancestry,
Lie here embraced by deeper death than we;
Nor shape nor thought of theirs can you descry
With keenest backward eye.

"They count as quite forgot;
They are as men who have existed not;
Theirs is a loss past loss of fitful breath;
It is the second death.

"We here, as yet, each day
Are blest with dear recall; as yet, can say
We hold in some soul loved continuance
Of shape and voice and glance.

"But what has been will be —
First memory, then oblivion's swallowing sea;
Like men foregone, shall we merge into those
Whose story no one knows.

"For which of us could hope
To show in life that world-awakening scope
Granted the few whose memory none lets die,
But all men magnify?

"We were but Fortune's sport;
Things true, things lovely, things of good report
We neither shunned nor sought . . . We see our bourne,
And seeing it we mourn."

(1902)

## AT CASTERBRIDGE FAIR

### 1. The Ballad-Singer

Sing, Ballad-singer, raise a hearty tune;
Make me forget that there was ever a one
I walked with in the meek light of the moon
When the day's work was done.

Rime, Ballad-rimer, start a country song;
Make me forget that she whom I loved well
Swore she would love me dearly, love me long,
Then — what I cannot tell!

Sing, Ballad-singer, from your little book;
Make me forget those heart-breaks, achings, fears;
Make me forget her name, her sweet sweet look —
Make me forget her tears.

### 2. Former Beauties

These market-dames, mid-aged, with lips thin-drawn,
And tissues sere,
Are they the ones we loved in years agone,
And courted here?

Are these the muslined pink young things to whom
We vowed and swore
In nooks on summer Sundays by the Froom,
Or Budmouth shore?

Do they remember those gay tunes we trod
Clasped on the green;
Aye; trod till moonlight set on the beaten sod
A satin sheen?

They must forget, forget! They cannot know
What once they were,
Or memory would transfigure them, and show
Them always fair.

### 3. After the Club-Dance

Black'on frowns east on Maidon,
And westward to the sea,
But on neither is his frown laden
With scorn, as his frown on me!

At dawn my heart grew heavy,
I could not sip the wine,
I left the jocund bevy
And that young man o' mine.

The roadside elms pass by me —
Why do I sink with shame

---

30-31. **Things . . . sought.** From *Philippians*, 4:8.— "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

*At Casterbridge Fair.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Casterbridge is Hardy's name for Dorchester, the county seat of Dorsetshire, in southern England. To its weekly fair, or market, came the country people to sell their produce, and ballad-singers to furnish entertainment.

*2. Former Beauties.* 7. **Froom,** the river Frome, which flows through Dorchester. 8. **Budmouth,** Weymouth, a seaport and summer resort on the Dorset coast.

*3. After the Club-Dance.* A dance is given by the Dorset Farmers' Club on the evenings of market-days.

1. **Black'on,** Blackdown Hill, an elevation southwest of Dorchester, on which now stands a monument to Hardy. **Maidon,** Maiden Castle, an ancient Celtic fort on a hill south of Dorchester.

When the birds a-perch there eye me?
They, too, have done the same!

### 4. The Market-Girl

Nobody took any notice of her as she stood on the causey curb,
All eager to sell her honey and apples and bunches of garden herb;
And if she had offered to give her wares and herself with them too that day,
I doubt if a soul would have cared to take a bargain so choice away.
But chancing to trace her sunburnt grace that morning as I passed nigh,
I went and I said, "Poor maidy dear! — and will none of the people buy?"
And so it began; and soon we knew what the end of it all must be,
And I found that though no others had bid, a prize had been won by me.

### 5. The Inquiry

And are ye one of Hermitage —
Of Hermitage, by Ivel Road,
And do ye know, in Hermitage
A thatch-roofed house where sengreens grow?
And does John Waywood live there still —
He of the name that there abode
When father hurdled on the hill
Some fifteen years ago?

Does he now speak o' Patty Beech,
The Patty Beech he used to — see,
Or ask at all if Patty Beech
Is known or heard of out this way?
— Ask if ever she's living yet,
And where her present home may be,
And how she bears life's fag and fret
After so long a day?

In years agone at Hermitage
This faded face was counted fair,
None fairer; and at Hermitage
We swore to wed when he should thrive.
But never a chance had he or I,
And waiting made his wish outwear,
And Time, that dooms man's love to die,
Preserves a maid's alive.

### 6. A Wife Waits

Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,
Where the tall liquor-cups foam;
I on the pavement up here by the Bow,
Wait, wait, to steady him home.

Will and his partner are treading a tune,
Loving companions they be;
Willy, before we were married in June,
Said he loved no one but me;

Said he would let his old pleasures all go
Ever to live with his Dear.
Will's at the dance in the Club-room below;
Shivering I wait for him here.

### 7. After the Fair

The singers are gone from the Cornmarket-place
With their broadsheets of rimes,
The street rings no longer in treble and bass
With their skits on the times,
And the Cross, lately thronged, is a dim naked space
That but echoes the stammering chimes.

From Clock-corner steps, as each quarter ding-dongs,
Away the folk roam
By the "Hart" and Grey's Bridge into byways and "drongs,"
Or across the ridged loam;
The younger ones shrilling the lately heard songs,
The old saying, "Would we were home."

The shy-seeming maiden so mute in the fair
Now rattles and talks,
And that one who looked the most swaggering there
Grows sad as she walks,
And she who seemed eaten by cankering care
In statuesque sturdiness stalks.

And midnight clears High Street of all but the ghosts
Of its buried burghees,
From the latest far back to those old Roman hosts

---

*4. The Market-Girl.* 1. **causey**, the bridge across the Frome River at the east end of Dorchester.

*5. The Inquiry.* 1. **Hermitage**, a village northwest of Dorchester on the road to Yeovil (Ivel). 4. **sengreens**, plants growing on the walls of houses. 7. **hurdled**, made hurdles, movable frames for folding sheep, enclosing land, etc.

*6. A Wife Waits.* 1. **Club-room**, the quarters of the Dorchester Farmers' Club.

3. **Bow**, a curved corner where the main streets of Dorchester cross.

*7. After the Fair.* 1. **Cornmarket-place**, the central market-place in Dorchester. 2. **broadsheets**, ballads, frequently dealing with current events, printed on one side of a large sheet of paper. 5. **Cross**, the intersection of the two main streets at the central market-place. 7. **Clock-corner**, the corner of the market-place next to St. Peter's Church. 9. **"Hart,"** the White Hart, the last inn on the London road out of Dorchester. **Grey's Bridge**, a stone bridge across a branch of the Frome River, near Dorchester on the London road. **"drongs,"** narrow lanes between walls (Dorset dialect). 19. **High Street**, the main east-and-west street of Dorchester. 20. **burghees**, citizens. 21. **Roman hosts**. Dorchester was, during the Roman occupation of Britain, the walled town of Durnovaria; relics of Roman times are preserved in the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester.

Whose remains one yet sees,
Who loved, laughed, and fought, hailed their friends, drank their toasts
At their meeting-times here, just as these!
(*1902;* 1909)

## SONGS from *THE DYNASTS*

### THE NIGHT OF TRAFALGÁR

In the wild October night-time, when the wind raved round the land,
And the Back-sea met the Front-sea, and our doors were blocked with sand,
And we heard the drub of Dead-man's Bay, where bones of thousands are,
We knew not what the day had done for us at Trafalgár.
(*All*) Had done,
Had done,
For us at Trafalgár!

"Pull hard, and make the Nothe, or down we go!" one says, says he.
We pulled; and bedtime brought the storm; but snug at home slept we.
Yet all the while our gallants after fighting through the day,
Were beating up and down the dark, sou'-west of Cadiz Bay.
The dark,
The dark,
Sou'-west of Cadiz Bay!

The victors and the vanquished then the storm it tossed and tore,
As hard they strove, those worn-out men, upon that surly shore;
Dead Nelson and his half-dead crew, his foes from near and far,
Were rolled together on the deep that night at Trafalgár!
The deep,
The deep,
That night at Trafalgár! (1903)

### BUDMOUTH DEARS

When we lay where Budmouth Beach is,
Oh, the girls were fresh as peaches,
With their tall and tossing figures and their eyes of blue and brown!
And our hearts would ache with longing
As we paced from our sing-songing,
With a smart *Clink! Clink!* up to the Esplanade and down.

They distracted and delayed us
By the pleasant pranks they played us,
And what marvel, then, if troopers, even of regiments of renown,
On whom flashed those eyes divine, O,
Should forget the countersign, O,
As we tore *Clink! Clink!* back to camp above the town.

Do they miss us much, I wonder,
Now that war has swept us sunder,
And we roam from where the faces smile to where the faces frown?
And no more behold the features
Of the fair fantastic creatures,
And no more *Clink! Clink!* past the parlors of the town?

Shall we once again there meet them?
Falter fond attempts to greet them?
Will the gay sling-jacket glow again beside the muslin gown?—
Will they archly quiz and con us
With a sideway glance upon us,
While our spurs *Clink! Clink!* up the Esplanade and down?
(1908)

### BEFORE WATERLOO

*Chorus of the Years* (*aerial music*)

The eyelids of eve fall together at last,
And the forms so foreign to field and tree
Lie down as though native, and slumber fast!

---

*Songs from The Dynasts.* Reprinted from Hardy's *The Dynasts* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers. *The Dynasts* is a long epic-drama, "intended simply for mental performance, and not for the stage," dealing with the wars with Napoleon, 1796-1815.

*The Night of Trafalgár.* The speakers in the poem are Weymouth boatmen who are awaiting news of the naval battle of Trafalgar, October 21, 1805. Lord Nelson, who was killed in the battle, led the English ships victoriously against the combined French and Spanish fleets in the waters between the harbor of Cadiz and Cape Trafalgar, northwest of Gibraltar on the Spanish coast. The men sing a "new ballet that they've lately had prented here, and were hawking about town last market-day."

2. **Back-sea . . . Front-sea.** With a storm at high-tide, the waves from the English Channel (Front-sea) swept over the barriers and into the harbor of Weymouth (Back-sea). 3. **Dead-man's Bay,** West Bay, dangerous because of its rocks and currents, west of Weymouth on the Dorset coast. 8. **Nothe,** a promontory which forms, on one side, the harbor of Weymouth.

*Budmouth Dears.* Budmouth is Weymouth, a town on the Dorset coast, frequented by soldiers and sailors from the neighboring Portland Roads, a naval anchorage. The song is sung on the eve of the Battle of Vitoria. The English Army in the Peninsula and the Spanish and Portuguese allies are bivouacking on the western side of the plain, about six miles from town. The Hussar, who sings the song, recalls a previous visit to Budmouth-Regis.

6. **Esplanade,** a terraced walk following the course of Weymouth Bay. 21. **sling-jacket,** a jacket worn by Hussars; it hung loosely over the shoulder and made a picturesque effect.

*Before Waterloo.* The English and their allies defeated Napoleon and the French in the Battle of Waterloo, fought, June 18, 1815, on a plain south of Brussels in Belgium.

**Chorus of the years.** The Years and the Pities (page 938) are impersonated abstractions among the characters of the drama. Hardy explains that the Years stand for "the passionless Insight of the Ages," and the Pities for "the Universal Sympathy of human nature—the spectator idealized."

*Chorus of the Pities*

Sore are the thrills of misgiving we see
In the artless champaign at this harlequinade,
Distracting a vigil where calm should be!

The green seems oppressed, and the Plain afraid
Of a Something to come, whereof these are the proofs —
Neither earthquake, nor storm, nor eclipse's shade!

*Chorus of the Years*

Yea, the coneys are scared by the thud of hoofs,
And their white scuts flash at their vanishing heels,
And swallows abandon the hamlet-roofs.

The mole's tunneled chambers are crushed by wheels,
The larks' eggs scattered, their owners fled;
And the hedgehog's household the sapper unseals.

The snail draws in at the terrible tread,
But in vain; he is crushed by the felloe-rim;
The worm asks what can be overhead,

And wriggles deep from a scene so grim,
And guesses him safe; for he does not know
What a foul red flood will be soaking him!

Beaten about by the heel and toe
Are butterflies, sick of the day's long rheum,
To die of a worse than the weather-foe.

Trodden and bruised to a miry tomb
Are ears that have greened but will never be gold,
And flowers in the bud that will never bloom.

*Chorus of the Pities*

So the season's intent, ere its fruit unfold,
Is frustrate, and mangled, and made succumb,
Like a youth of promise struck stark and cold! . . .

And what of these who tonight have come?

*Chorus of the Years*

The young sleep sound; but the weather awakes
In the veterans, pains from the past that numb;

Old stabs of Ind, old Peninsular aches,
Old Friedland chills, haunt their moist mud bed,
Cramps from Austerlitz; till their slumber breaks.

*Chorus of Sinister Spirits*

And each soul shivers as sinks his head
On the loam he's to lease with the other dead
From tomorrow's mist-fall till Time be sped!

(1908)

## THE CURATE'S KINDNESS

### A WORKHOUSE IRONY

I thought they'd be strangers aroun' me,
  But she's to be there!
Let me jump out o' wagon and go back and drown me
  At Pummery or Ten-Hatches Weir.

I thought: "Well, I've come to the Union —
  The workhouse at last —
After honest hard work all the week, and Communion
  O' Zundays, these fifty years past.

"'Tis hard; but," I thought, "never mind it —
  There's gain in the end;
And when I get used to the place I shall find it
  A home, and may find there a friend.

"Life there will be better than t'other,
  For peace is assured.
*The men in one wing and their wives in another*
  Is strictly the rule of the Board."

Just then one young Pa'son arriving
  Steps up out of breath
To the side o' the wagon wherein we were driving
  To Union; and calls out and saith:

---

5. **champaign,** open plain. **harlequinade,** fantastic show—referring to the coming battle. 10. **coneys,** rabbits. 11. **scuts,** tails. 15. **sapper,** a soldier employed in digging trenches. 17. **felloe-rim,** the rim of a wheel on a gun-mount or supply-wagon. 23. **rheum,** sorrow; poetic for tears.

34-36. **Ind . . . Austerlitz,** earlier battles and campaigns in which the armies had engaged. The Indian campaign, 1798-99, included battles in Egypt and Asia Minor; the Peninsular campaign took place in Portugal and Spain from 1804 to 1814; at Friedland, in East Prussia, Napoleon defeated the Russians and Prussians in 1807; at Austerlitz, in Austria, he defeated an army of Russians and Austrians in 1805.

*The Curate's Kindness.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

4. **Pummery,** Poundbury, an ancient Celtic or Roman earthwork on an elevation near Dorchester; it contains a pond. **Ten-Hatches Weir,** a pond held back by a dam in a meadow near Dorchester. 5. **Union,** a home for the poor, supported by a union of several neighboring parishes, and administered by a board of governors.

"Old folks, that harsh order is altered,
Be not sick of heart!
The Guardians they poohed and they pished and they paltered
When urged not to keep you apart.

" 'It is wrong,' I maintained, 'to divide them,
Near forty years wed.'
'Very well, sir. We promise, then, they shall abide them
In one wing together,' they said."

Then I sank — knew 'twas quite a foredone thing
That misery should be
To the end! . . . To get freed of her there was the one thing
Had made the change welcome to me.

To go there was ending but badly;
'Twas shame and 'twas pain;
"But anyhow," thought I, "thereby I shall gladly
Get free of this forty years' chain."

I thought they'd be strangers aroun' me,
But she's to be there!
Let me jump out o' wagon and go back and drown me
At Pummery or Ten-Hatches Weir.

(1909)

## LET ME ENJOY

(MINOR KEY)

Let me enjoy the earth no less
Because the all-enacting Might
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Had other aims than my delight.

About my path there flits a Fair,
Who throws me not a word or sign;
I'll charm me with her ignoring air,
And laud the lips not meant for mine.

From manuscripts of moving song
Inspired by scenes and dreams unknown,
I'll pour out raptures that belong
To others, as they were my own.

And some day hence, towards Paradise
And all its blest — if such should be —
I will lift glad, afar-off eyes,
Though it contain no place for me.

(1909)

## From *SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE*

### 1. AT TEA

The kettle descants in a cozy drone,
And the young wife looks in her husband's face,
And then at her guest's, and shows in her own
Her sense that she fills an envied place;
And the visiting lady is all abloom,
And says there was never so sweet a room.

And the happy young housewife does not know
That the woman beside her was first his choice,
Till the fates ordained it could not be so . . .
Betraying nothing in look or voice
The guest sits smiling and sips her tea,
And he throws her a stray glance yearningly.

### 3. BY HER AUNT'S GRAVE

"Sixpence a week," says the girl to her lover,
"Aunt used to bring me, for she could confide
In me alone, she vowed. 'Twas to cover
The cost of her headstone when she died.
And that was a year ago last June;
I've not yet fixed it. But I must soon."

"And where is the money now, my dear?"
"Oh, snug in my purse . . . Aunt was so slow
In saving it — eighty weeks, or near." . . .
"Let's spend it," he hints. "For she won't know.
There's a dance tonight at the Load of Hay."
She passively nods. And they go that way.

### 9. AT THE ALTAR-RAIL

"My bride is not coming, alas!" says the groom,
And the telegram shakes in his hand. "I own
It was hurried! We met at a dancing-room
When I went to the Cattle-Show alone,
And then, next night, where the Fountain leaps,
And the Street of the Quarter-Circle sweeps.

"Aye, she won me to ask her to be my wife —
'Twas foolish perhaps! — to forsake the ways
Of the flaring town for a farmer's life.
She agreed. And we fixed it. Now she says:

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*Let Me Enjoy.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.
*Satires of Circumstance.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

*1. At Tea.* 1. **descants,** sings.
*3. By Her Aunt's Grave.* 11. **Load of Hay,** a famous inn on Hampstead Road, London, described by Washington Irving in his *Tales of a Traveler.*
*9. At the Altar-Rail.* 4. **Cattle-Show,** an annual show held at the Agricultural Hall in Islington, London. 5-6. **Fountain . . . Quarter-Circle,** the Fountain of Trafalgar Square and the Quadrant, a curved portion of Regent Street, London.

*'It's sweet of you, dear, to prepare me a nest,*
*But a swift, short, gay life suits me best.*
*What I really am you have never gleaned;*
*I had eaten the apple ere you were weaned.'"*
(1911)

## BEENY CLIFF

Oh, the opal and the sapphire of that wandering western sea,
And the woman riding high above with bright hair flapping free —
The woman whom I loved so, and who loyally loved me.

The pale mews plained below us, and the waves seemed far away
In a nether sky, engrossed in saying their ceaseless babbling say,
As we laughed light-heartedly aloft on that clear-sunned March day.

A little cloud then cloaked us, and there flew an irised rain,
And the Atlantic dyed its levels with a dull misfeatured stain,
And then the sun burst out again, and purples prinked the main.

— Still in all its chasmal beauty bulks old Beeny to the sky,
And shall she and I not go there once again now March is nigh,
And the sweet things said in that March say anew there by and by?

What if still in chasmal beauty looms that wild weird western shore,
The woman now is — elsewhere — whom the ambling pony bore,
And nor knows nor cares for Beeny, and will laugh there nevermore.
(*1913;* 1914)

## BEYOND THE LAST LAMP

(*Near Tooting Common*)

While rain, with eve in partnership,
Descended darkly, drip, drip, drip,
Beyond the last lone lamp I passed
Walking slowly, whispering sadly,
Two linked loiterers, wan, downcast:
Some heavy thought constrained each face,
And blinded them to time and place.

The pair seemed lovers, yet absorbed
In mental scenes no longer orbed
By love's young rays. Each countenance
As it slowly, as it sadly
Caught the lamplight's yellow glance,
Held in suspense a misery
At things which had been or might be.

When I retrod that watery way
Some hours beyond the droop of day,
Still I found pacing there the twain
Just as slowly, just as sadly,
Heedless of the night and rain.
One could but wonder who they were,
And what wild woe detained them there.

Though thirty years of blur and blot
Have slid since I beheld that spot,
And saw in curious converse there
Moving slowly, moving sadly
That mysterious tragic pair,
Its olden look may linger on —
All but the couple; they have gone.

Whither? Who knows, indeed . . . And yet
To me, when nights are weird and wet,
Without those comrades there at tryst
Creeping slowly, creeping sadly,
That lone lane does not exist.
There they seem brooding on their pain,
And will, while such a lane remain.
(1914)

## "AH, ARE YOU DIGGING ON MY GRAVE?"

"Ah, are you digging on my grave
My loved one? — planting rue?"
— "No; yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
'It cannot hurt her now,' he said,
'That I should not be true.'"

"Then who is digging on my grave?
My nearest dearest kin?"
— "Ah, no; they sit and think, 'What use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death's gin.'"

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*Beeny Cliff.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

Beeny Cliff is a headland on the western Cornish coast, a little over a mile from St. Juliot, the home, before marriage, of the first Mrs. Hardy.

4. **mews plained,** sea-gulls cried. 12. **that March,** in 1870, when Hardy first met Miss Gifford, who became the first Mrs. Hardy; cf. "*When I Set Out for Lyonnesse,*" page 928.

*Beyond the Last Lamp.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

**Tooting Common,** a park on the southern outskirts of London. Hardy lived near, in Upper Tooting, 1878-80.

*"Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?"* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

2. **rue,** an herb with bitter leaves, symbolic of sorrow. 12. **gin,** trap.

"But some one digs upon my grave?
My enemy? — prodding sly?"
— "Nay; when she heard you had passed the Gate
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie."

"Then, who is digging on my grave?
Say — since I have not guessed!"
— "O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog, who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest?"

"Ah, yes! *You* dig upon my grave . . .
Why flashed it not on me
That one true heart was left behind!
What feeling do we ever find
To equal among human kind
A dog's fidelity!"

"Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.
I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting-place." (1914)

## UNDER THE WATERFALL

"Whenever I plunge my arm, like this,
In a basin of water, I never miss
The sweet sharp sense of a fugitive day
Fetched back from its thickening shroud of gray.
Hence the only prime
And real love-rime
That I know by heart,
And that leaves no smart,
Is the purl of a little valley fall
About three spans wide and two spans tall
Over a table of solid rock,
And into a scoop of the self-same block;
The purl of a runlet that never ceases
In stir of kingdoms, in wars, in peaces;
With a hollow boiling voice it speaks
And has spoken since hills were turfless peaks."

"And why gives this the only prime
Idea to you of a real love-rime?
And why does plunging your arm in a bowl
Full of spring water, bring throbs to your soul?"

"Well, under the fall, in a crease of the stone,
Though where precisely none ever has known,
Jammed darkly, nothing to show how prized,
And by now with its smoothness opalized,
Is a drinking-glass;
For, down that pass
My lover and I
Walked under a sky
Of blue with a leaf-wove awning of green,
In the burn of August, to paint the scene,
And we placed our basket of fruit and wine
By the runlet's rim, where we sat to dine;
And when we had drunk from the glass together,
Arched by the oak-copse from the weather,
I held the vessel to rinse in the fall,
Where it slipped, and sank, and was past recall,
Though we stooped and plumbed the little abyss
With long bared arms. There the glass still is.
And, as said, if I thrust my arm below
Cold water in basin or bowl, a throe
From the past awakens a sense of that time,
And the glass we used, and the cascade's rime.
The basin seems the pool, and its edge
The hard smooth face of the brook-side ledge,
And the leafy pattern of china-ware
The hanging plants that were bathing there.

"By night, by day, when it shines or lours,
There lies intact that chalice of ours,
And its presence adds to the rime of love
Persistently sung by the fall above.
No lip has touched it since his and mine
In turns therefrom sipped lovers' wine."
(1914)

## THE OXEN

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

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*Under the Waterfall.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

*The Oxen.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.
A widespread folk-belief is that cattle fall on their knees at midnight of Christmas Eve, as did the ox in the stable at Bethlehem when Christ was born.

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so. (*1915;* 1917)

## THE CLOCK-WINDER

It is dark as a cave,
Or a vault in the nave
When the iron door
Is closed, and the floor
Of the church relaid
With trowel and spade.

But the parish-clerk
Cares not for the dark
As he winds in the tower
At a regular hour
The rheumatic clock
Whose dilatory knock
You can hear when praying
At the day's decaying,
Or at any lone while
From a pew in the aisle.

Up, up from the ground,
Around and around
In the turret stair
He clambers, to where
The wheelwork is,
With its tick, click, whizz,
Reposefully measuring
Each day to its end
That mortal men spend
In sorrowing and pleasuring.
Nightly thus does he climb
To the trackway of Time.

Him I followed one night
To this place without light,
And, ere I spoke, heard
Him say, word by word,
At the end of his winding,
The darkness unminding:

"So I wipe out one more,
My Dear, of the sore
Sad days that still be,
Like a drying Dead Sea,
Between you and me!"

Who she was no man knew:
He had long borne him blind
To all womankind;
And was ever one who
Kept his past out of view. (1917)

## "FOR LIFE I HAD NEVER CARED GREATLY"

For life I had never cared greatly,
As worth a man's while;
Peradventures unsought,
Peradventures that finished in naught,
Had kept me from youth and through manhood till lately
Unwon by its style.

In earliest years — why I know not —
I viewed it askance;
Conditions of doubt,
Conditions that leaked slowly out,
May haply have bent me to stand and to show not
Much zest for its dance.

With symphonies soft and sweet color
It courted me then,
Till evasions seemed wrong,
Till evasions gave in to its song,
And I warmed, until living aloofly loomed duller
Than life among men.

Anew I found naught to set eyes on,
When, lifting its hand,
It uncloaked a star,
Uncloaked it from fog-damps afar,
And showed its beams burning from pole to horizon
As bright as a brand.

And so, the rough highway forgetting,
I pace hill and dale
Regarding the sky,
Regarding the vision on high,
And thus re-illumed have no humor for letting
My pilgrimage fail. (1917)

## AN ANCIENT TO ANCIENTS

Where once we danced, where once we sang,
Gentlemen,
The floors are sunken, cobwebs hang,
And cracks creep; worms have fed upon
The doors. Yea, sprightlier times were then
Than now, with harps and tabrets gone,
Gentlemen!

Where once we rowed, where once we sailed,
Gentlemen,
And damsels took the tiller, veiled

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13. **barton,** farmyard. **coomb,** a valley between steep hills.

*The Clock-Winder.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

*"For Life I Had Never Cared Greatly."* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

*An Ancient to Ancients.* Reprinted from Hardy's *Collected Poems* by permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

6. **tabrets,** small drums.

Against too strong a stare (God wot
Their fancy, then or anywhen!)
Upon that shore we are clean forgot,
Gentlemen!

We have lost somewhat, afar and near,
Gentlemen,
The thinning of our ranks each year
Affords a hint we are nigh undone,
That we shall not be ever again
The marked of many, loved of one,
Gentlemen.

In dance the polka hit our wish,
Gentlemen,
The paced quadrille the spry schottische,
"Sir Roger." — And in opera spheres
The "Girl" (the famed "Bohemian"),
And "Trovatore," held the ears,
Gentlemen.

This season's paintings do not please,
Gentlemen,
Like Etty, Mulready, Maclise;
Throbbing romance has waned and wanned;
No wizard wields the witching pen
Of Bulwer, Scott, Dumas, and Sand,
Gentlemen.

The bower we shrined to Tennyson,
Gentlemen,
Is roof-wrecked; damps there drip upon
Sagged seats, the creeper-nails are rust,
The spider is sole denizen;
Even she who voiced those rimes is dust,
Gentlemen!

We who met sunrise sanguine-souled,
Gentlemen,
Are wearing weary. We are old;
These younger press; we feel our rout
Is imminent to Aïdes' den —
That evening shades are stretching out,
Gentlemen!

And yet, though ours be failing frames,
Gentlemen,
So were some others history names,
Who trode their track light-limbed and fast
As these youth, and not alien
From enterprise, to their long last,
Gentlemen.

Sophocles, Plato, Socrates,
Gentlemen,
Pythagoras, Thucydides,
Herodotus, and Homer — yea,
Clement, Augustin, Origen,
Burnt brightlier toward their setting-day,
Gentlemen.

And ye, red-lipped and smooth-browed; list,
Gentlemen;
Much is there waits you we have missed;
Much lore we leave you worth the knowing,
Much, much has lain outside our ken:
Nay, rush not: time serves: we are going,
Gentlemen.

(1922)

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11. **wot,** knows. 25. **"Sir Roger,"** Sir Roger de Coverley, an old-fashioned country dance. 26. **The "Girl" . . . "Bohemian,"** *The Bohemian Girl*, an opera by Balfe, produced in London in 1843. 27. **"Trovatore,"** an opera by Verdi, 1853. 31. **Etty . . . Maclise,** English and Irish painters of the earlier nineteenth century: William Etty (1787-1849), William Mulready (1786-1863), Daniel Maclise (1806-70). 34. **Bulwer . . . Sand,** nineteenth-century English and French novelists: Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1803-73; Sir Walter Scott, 1771-1832; Alexander Dumas, 1802-70; George Sand (Baroness Dudevant), 1804-76. 36-38. **bower . . . wrecked,** a reference to the decline in favor, in certain critical circles, of Tennyson's poetry after his death.

39. **creeper-nails,** the nails which fasten the vine to the wall. 47. **Aïdes,** Hades, god of the Greek underworld. 57-61. **Sophocles . . . Origen,** Greek authors and philosophers and Christian fathers of the church who had in common a profitable old age.

# BIBLIOGRAPHIES, BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES, CRITICISMS, LISTS OF WORKS, AND CRITICAL NOTES

The following bibliographies are meant to serve as convenient reference lists for a study of the literature of the Victorian Period. Books containing discussions of the period in general or of special phases of the literature of the period rather than of individual authors are listed in the General Bibliography.

The biographical sketch of each poet gives only essential facts of his life, with especial reference to his literary work. Following each sketch is a list of the chief publications of each poet with date of first appearance.

The standard editions of each author's works include the more important editions of complete works, complete poetical works, and selected writings; they also include critical editions of significant single poems. Unless otherwise specified, editions are in one volume.

The biographies and criticisms are arranged alphabetically by authors.

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Macaulay was born in Leicestershire, the eldest son of a wealthy merchant and leader in the movement to abolish the slave-trade. Reading eagerly at the age of three, beginning at seven a compendium of universal history, and at eight learning Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion* by rote, Macaulay showed during his childhood the ability to read everything and to forget nothing that was to make him one of the best-informed men of his age. His career at Cambridge, despite a failure in mathematics, was brilliant; he began soon after taking his degree to write articles for the periodicals. His first great success came with an essay on Milton sent in 1825 to Francis Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. Jeffrey wrote in praise: "The more I think, the less I can conceive where you picked up that style." The rolling sentences, the clarity and rhetorical power of subsequent articles soon established Macaulay's reputation among a wide body of readers. He created the historical essay as a literary type. After 1830, when he was elected to the House of Commons, Macaulay's energies were divided between literature and parliamentary duties. His short, stout figure and gorgeous waistcoat became familiar on the floor of the Commons; he took a leading part in governmental reform and in the administration of India; but he rose at five o'clock each day to write articles, on a variety of literary and historical topics, for the *Edinburgh Review*. At the end of a four-year residence in India as a member of the supreme council, Macaulay made in 1838 a tour of Italy to supplement his reading in Roman history and literature with first-hand impressions. This material he used in writing his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, which appeared in 1842, and became so popular that in thirty years a hundred thousand copies had been sold. The last part of Macaulay's life was devoted, in the gradually increasing intervals of public business, to his *History of England*, two volumes of which appeared in 1848 and two in 1855; the work had an extraordinary success. Although he never married, Macaulay found happiness in the home of his sister and her husband, Charles Trevelyan, for whose children he had great affection. In 1857 he was made a baron; in 1858 he wrote five excellent biographies for the *Encyclopedia Britannica;* in 1859 he died seated in an easy chair in his library, with a book on his knees.

Macaulay's principal publications were: *Lays of Ancient Rome*, 1842; *Critical and Historical Essays Contributed to the Edinburgh Review*, 1843; *History of England*, 1849-61; *Speeches*, 1854; *Miscellaneous Writings* (ed. by Ellis), 1860.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"Fire, directness, energy of handling—these are the main necessities of the martial ballad, rather than any poetic subtlety; and all these were at Macaulay's command. 'Remember thy swashing blow' is the Shakespearian advice which might be given to the writer of the ballad warlike. And Macaulay always remembers his swashing blow. He has none of the deep poetic quality which informs the best work of Mr. Kipling. But he does not aim at it. He keeps within a limit and a kind; and in that kind does very excellent pieces of work; quite honest, healthy work, which may well be allowed to stand, even though a stronger than he [Kipling] be come upon him."—F. Thompson, *Academy*, Jan. 23, 1897, p. 122.

"It may be objected—was Macaulay a poet at all? Matthew Arnold says expressly that to appreciate the *Lays of Ancient Rome* is a sure test of poetic incapacity; they are 'pinchbeck ballads' . . . The truth is that Macaulay in the *Lays* sounds only a few notes, but he sounds them very true. The joy of action, the joy of devotion, the love of home and liberty, are very commonplace topics; they do not require deep thought, they appeal to the heart, not the head; but the man who can express them in lines that stick in other men's minds is something of a poet. And it may be frankly claimed that in doing this simple thing, and doing it well, Macaulay ranks next to Scott among our poets—Scott whom also Matthew Arnold characteristically undervalues."—J. Wells, *Fortnightly Review*, Oct., 1928, pp. 444-45.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### HORATIUS (p. 3)

This is one of the ballads in *The Lays of Ancient Rome*. Macaulay says that he speaks in them, not in his own person, "but in the person of ancient minstrels who knew only what a Roman citizen, born three or four years before the Christian era, may be supposed to have known, and who are in no wise above the passions and prejudices of their age and nation."

There are several versions of the legend of Horatius Cocles, the hero of the ballad. According to the Greek historian Polybius, Horatius defended the bridge alone and was drowned. According to the Roman historian Livy, there were three defenders, all of whom swam safely to shore and received great honors and awards. Macaulay says of the ballad:

"The following ballad is supposed to have been made about a hundred and twenty years after the war which it celebrates, and just before the taking of Rome by the Gauls.[1] The author seems to have been an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which had never really existed. The allusion, however, to the partial manner in which the public lands were allotted could proceed only from a plebeian; and the allusion to the fraudulent sale of spoils marks the date of the poem and shows that the poet shared in the general discontent with which the proceedings of Camillus,[2] after the taking of Veii, were regarded."

In 750 B.C. Rome fell into the hands of the Tarquins, powerful Etruscan princes from across the Tiber. They eventually proved to be tyrannical rulers, and the family was banished from the city in 510 B.C. The immediate cause of the expulsion was the rape of Lucretia, wife of T. Collatinus, by Sextus Tarquinius (line 200). King Tarquin attempted to recover the throne after making an alliance with Porsena, the ruler of Etruria, an Italian state north of Rome. The ballad relates the exploit of Horatius when the city was resisting an attack of the Etruscans and their allies. The various places mentioned in the poem are in Italy or on neighboring shores. The names of some of the heroes are invented.

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[1] In 390 B.C.

[2] A Roman general and dictator in the war against Veii an Etruscan city and stronghold, in 396 B.C.

## JOHN HENRY NEWMAN (1801-90), p. 10

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The writing of John Henry, Cardinal Newman (1801-90), was the by-product of a life intensely devoted to a quest for a satisfactory personal religion and to a warfare against what he deemed irreligious tendencies in society. From early childhood his mind was set on the unseen. Through Scott's novels he lived imaginatively in the Middle Ages; from the Bible he peopled his world with angels; and he felt with great vividness the presence of God. In 1816 came the mystic experience which he described in his *Apologia* as an "inward conversion," a dedication to a religious purpose from which he never deviated. After taking his degree at Oxford, he was ordained a clergyman in the Church of England; and in 1828 he was made vicar of the Church of St. Mary's at Oxford, where his sermons were to be of much influence in coming years. With a group of Oxford friends, including Harrell Froude, John Keble, and Edward Pusey, he began to feel intense dissatisfaction with the emotional coldness and the dependence on rationalism of the English Church, and sought to make it more spiritual and at the same time more socially powerful. Before any public movement was launched, however, Newman's health failed, and he was persuaded in the winter of 1832 to make a tour of southern Europe.

In Rome he began, in what has been called "a lyrical interlude between the prose chapters of a working life," his *Lyra Apostolica*, in which he voiced his religious turmoil and his hatred of English Liberalism. He hurried home to take up the battle in behalf of a conservative sacramental form of piety and theology. A great movement in the Church of England, known as the Oxford Movement, was the result. The Movement was launched by a sermon of Keble's in 1833, by a series of ninety *Tracts for the Times* (published at Oxford) of which Newman wrote twenty-nine, and by Newman's sermons at St. Mary's. These sermons, which Matthew Arnold called "religious music," together with Newman's clear and compelling style in his *Tracts* and the magic force of his personality, won sympathy for the cause and deeply affected religious and social ideas in England. Newman came more and more to feel that his ideal in religion, with its emphasis on tradition and on an imagination that transcends reason, could never be satisfied in the English Church. He retired, therefore, from St. Mary's in 1842, and in 1845 he became a Roman Catholic. The last half of Newman's life was less public than the first. He continued to write: from lectures delivered at the shortlived Catholic University in Dublin came, in 1852, his humanistic *Idea of a University;* in answer to an attack made by Charles Kingsley on Catholic ethics came, in 1864, his autobiographic *Apologia pro Vita Sua.* He was made a cardinal in 1879. He lived for the most part in somewhat lonely retirement, at his oratory in Edgbaston, where he died in 1890.

Newman's principal writings were: *The Arians of the Fourth Century,* 1833; *Lyra Apostolica,* 1834; *Tracts for the Times* (contributions), 1834-41; *The Prophetical Office of the Church,* 1837; *Parochial Sermons,* 1837-42; *Sermons on Subjects of the Day,* 1842; *The Idea of a University,* 1852; *Verses on Religious Subjects,* 1853; *Calista,* 1856; *Apologia pro Vita Sua,* 1864; *The Dream of Gerontius,* 1865; *Verses on Various Occasions,* 1868; *Grammar of Assent,* 1870.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Newman was a writer almost by accident. He was essentially a leader of men, an ecclesiastical prince, who used literature as an instrument of his rule. But he was also a mystic and a poet, gifted with literary power of the most winning and magnetic kind. His influence upon pure literature has therefore been great. His medieval cast of mind, his passionate perception of the beauty of the symbolism embodied in the medieval church, united with Ruskin's devotion to medieval art to influence a remarkable group of young painters and poets known as the 'Pre-Raphaelites.' "—Moody and Lovett, *A History of English Literature* (1913), p. 342.

## FRANCIS SYLVESTER MAHONY ("Father Prout") (1805-66), p. 11

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Francis Sylvester Mahony (1805-66) was an Irish priest, a humorist, and a facile writer of verse in many languages. Because he returned drunk from a hunting expedition, he resigned his post in an Irish Jesuit college, and soon after settled in the Bohemian quarter of London, where he became the friend of Dickens and Thackeray, and wrote humorous papers under the pen-name of Father Prout. Never content to live long in one country, he traveled in Hungary and Asia Minor; his black clothes, never too clean, his blue eyes and spectacles, his odd combination of wit and sentiment, became well known in Rome and in Paris, where he lived his later years and died. He described himself as "an Irish potato seasoned with Attic salt."

Mahony's principal publications were: *Reliques of Father Prout,* 1836; *Facts and Figures from Italy,* 1847; *Final Reliques* (ed. by Jerrold), 1876.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"But of all Prout's songs, English, French, Latin, or Italian, there is none that will be so great a favorite as that queerest but most plaintive of lyrics, the well-known 'Bells of Shandon.' In the whole repertory of Irish songs there is nothing that more fully bears out Mr. Thackeray's theory about melancholy being a leading characteristic of everything Irish. Written though it is in distinct imitation of the absurd doggerel ballads of the 'Groves of Blarney' school, and full of reckless extravagances, there is a strange wild melody and a vague pathos in the lines that act like the rambling music of an Æolian harp. It suggests a picture of the good old man, whom we cannot afford to treat as a fictitious personage, strolling in his youthful days by the side of some French stream, lonely and homesick, pining for the 'pleasant waters of the river Lee.' "—*Saturday Review,* March 17, 1860, p. 344.

## JAMES CLARENCE MANGAN (1808-49), p. 12

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Clarence Mangan (1808-49) spent his whole life in Dublin. Desperately poor, he found his chief pleasure in browsing among German, Old Irish, and Oriental books in the Dublin University library, where he was employed, and in supporting the various Irish nationalist movements of the time. He became an opium-eater, suffered from strange hallucinations, and looked, in his tight-fitting blue coat and fantastic hat, "rather like a specter from some German romance than a living creature." In 1849 he was found in miserable lodgings dying of starvation and cholera. His poetry, never collected in his lifetime, consists of "translations" from Oriental poets that had no existence, revolutionary ballads, and a few poems, based on the older literature of Ireland, that anticipate the Irish revival of a later day.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"In many respects, both in life and genius, Mangan bears a resemblance to Edgar A. Poe, and, if he did not achieve a single marked success like 'The Raven,' his poetical faculty was of the same somber sort, and his command of original and musical rhythm almost equally great."—A. M. Williams, *The Poets and the Poetry of Ireland* (1881), p. 325.

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## (1809-92), p. 13

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The first period of Tennyson's life, from his birth in 1809 in the quiet rectory of Somersby, in Lincolnshire, to the death of his father in 1831, was happy and sheltered. His natural taste for poetry developed early in the cultured environment of his home. He wrote lyrics at five, and at eight, blank verse in the manner of Thomson's *Seasons;* he imitated Scott and Moore, and at the death of Byron in 1824 he "thought everything was over and finished for everyone—that nothing else mattered." With his brother Charles he published a volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers* in 1827 that clearly shows the influence of his first poetic masters. After entering Cambridge in 1828, he shifted his allegiance to Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats and wrote poems that were extravagantly admired by his circle of college friends. Most of these friends, including Arthur Henry Hallam, belonged to a club called "The Apostles," which met periodically to discuss, conservatively but eagerly, the problems of religion, ethics, and science that were then beginning to trouble society. The members of the club looked up to the handsome and romantic Tennyson as their natural leader.

He was hence somewhat spoiled by praise when, after 1831, his life became less easy. His father's death brought new responsibilities. The public reception of *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830) and of the 1832 volume of *Poems*, despite the inclusion of *The Palace of Art, A Dream of Fair Women*, and *The Lady of Shalott*, was cool; and Tennyson, always unusually sensitive to adverse cricitism, was hurt by sarcastic articles that appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* and the *Quarterly Review*. Another blow came in 1833 with the death of Hallam in Vienna, a sudden end to an unusually intimate friendship. Tennyson suffered also from the want of money, and was forced to postpone indefinitely his marriage with Emily Sellwood, to whom he became engaged in 1836.

In meeting these reverses Tennyson showed what Carlyle later called "a right valiant, true-fighting, victorious heart; strong as a lion's, yet gentle, loving, and full of music." He consoled himself for Hallam's death by beginning the long series of elegies that were brought together in 1850 as *In Memoriam A.H.H.* He resolutely set about perfecting himself in the art of poetry; for ten years he wrote almost continuously, revising again and again both his new work and that which had already been published, until he made himself an expert craftsman in verse. Finally, in 1842, he published his popular *Poems* and at once had his reward; the volume was everywhere enthusiastically received. Eased of his financial burden in 1845 by a government pension of £200 a year and heartened by the great success of *In Memoriam*, he married in 1850 Miss Sellwood, to whom he had been engaged for fourteen years. In the same year he was appointed to succeed Wordsworth as poet laureate, and from that date until his death he remained the official poetic voice of Victorian England.

In order to indulge his love for retirement, for being alone with his moods, he purchased in 1853 the estate of Farringford, on the Isle of Wight; there he lived quietly, working in his garden, tramping across the moors, writing poetry, or talking with a few intimates amid clouds of tobacco smoke in a tiny room at the top of the house. He kept up also his Latin and Greek, and his early habit of reading by which he continued to inform himself on new discoveries in the physical sciences; his wide reading during his life included not only English poetry but French, German, and Italian poetry as well. Meanwhile he had written the great *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington* (1852), the popular *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1854), and a series of dramatic monologues and lyrics entitled *Maud* (1855). A journey to Wales, where he visited the spots associated with the Arthurian legends, reawakened his interest in the theme that had fascinated him from boyhood and which had furnished material for *The Lady of Shalott* (1832), *Morte d'Arthur* (1842), and other early poems. This enthusiasm resulted in 1859 in the publication of the first group of the *Idylls of the King*, to be followed by others in 1869 and 1872, with the entire group rearranged and published as a complete series in 1888. In 1864 appeared the *Enoch Arden* volume containing the *Northern Farmer*, the first of his humorous pieces in dialect. In 1868 Tennyson built Aldworth, a Gothic structure in Surrey, near the Sussex border, which thereafter served as an alternate home with Farringford. In 1875 he began a series of poetic dramas, the most important of which were *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1876), and *Becket* (1884), constituting a "trilogy of English history."

More honors, which did little to disturb the essential simplicity of his character, came with advancing years. His elevation to the peerage, which he was prevailed upon to accept in 1884, only "for the sake of literature," was a tribute not only from the Queen but also from all English-speaking peoples to a poet whom they regarded also as a prophet, a great ethical teacher. His writing continued, almost undiminished in excellence. After *Tiresias and Other Poems* (1885) came the vigorous *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After* (1886), his literary autobiography, *Merlin and the Gleam* (1889), and *Crossing the Bar*, which always stands last in any edition of his collected works. In 1892 he died peacefully at Farringford and was buried in Westminster Abbey beside Robert Browning.

Tennyson's principal publications were: *Poems by Two Brothers*, 1827; *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, 1830; *Poems*, 1832; *Poems*, 1842; *The Princess*, 1847; *In Memoriam*, 1850; *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, 1852; *Maud, and Other Poems*, 1855; *Idylls of the King* (*Enid, Vivien, Elaine, Guinevere*), 1859; *Idylls of the Hearth* (*Enoch Arden*), 1864; *The Holy Grail, and Other Poems* (*Coming of Arthur, The Holy Grail, Pelleas and Ettarre, Passing of Arthur*), 1869; *Gareth and Lynette, etc.*, 1872; *Queen Mary*, 1875; *Harold*, 1876; *Ballads, and Other Poems*, 1880; *Becket*, 1884; *Tiresias, and Other Poems*, 1885; *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, 1886; *Demeter, and Other Poems*, 1889; *The Death of Œnone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems*, 1892.

## INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"Tennyson more than any other writer of his day interpreted the Victorian Age to itself. It was an age of rapid change and palpable transition. Political revolutions, social upheavals, moral rebellions, intellectual insurrections, religious revolts, were transforming the old and stable world into a chaos whence a new order could not, by many anxious watchers, be seen to emerge. Tennyson was keenly sensitive to the movements of the time. He took an absorbed interest in current politics; he sympathized with social reform; he kept in close touch with the new science, and, in particular, seized with quick comprehension and eager welcome the novel and (at first appearance) disquieting doctrine of evolution; he was profoundly religious, and he recognized the necessity, both for himself and for his generation, of reconciling if possible the new knowledge with the old faith. He first convinced himself and then he showed his fellows—in poems such as *In Memoriam, The Ancient Sage, Silent Voices*, and *Crossing the Bar*—how the perplexities of the moment could be resolved, and how the essentials of the ancient creeds could be restated in terms of the most modern science. He made it clear to many doubtful and troubled minds that, in spite of the triumphs of naturalism, it was still possible, and indeed necessary, to hold fast to faith in human freedom, in Divine immanence, and in personal immortality. He based his convictions . . . not on external evidences which criticism can question or skepticism assail, but on intuitions and revelations peculiar to the patient and expectant soul . . . It was because he *felt* so accurately the perplexities of the age, and because he wrestled with them faithfully and resolved them hopefully, that he made so strong an appeal to the conservative culture of his generation."—F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *Spectator*, Oct. 6, 1917, p. 352.

"It is the perfection of his artistry which is, for our age even more than for his own, the enduring grandeur of Tennyson. No modern poet has labored more truly on his work or believed more sincerely in the greatness of his art or has striven more nobly for perfection than did Tennyson. The writing of poetry was to him not a mere exercise, nor, on the other hand, the result of a fine fervor; it was a vocation in which he toiled as laboriously as any worker in metals or precious gems. The whirligig of time has brought in its revenges so far as his position as the voice of the English people is concerned; but if we have lost the old worship of the prophet, we have gained a new understanding and admiration of the artist. 'The labor of the file' was Tennyson's labor. At his worst, we can bring no charge against him more serious than sentimentality, a comfortable conservatism, a too-easy faith; at his best he is one of the greatest glories of the English tongue."—Marjorie H. Nicholson, Introduction to *Selected Poems of Alfred, Lord Tennyson*, pp. 20-21.

See Watson's *Lachrymæ Musarum*, p. 902.

## CRITICAL NOTES

### THE POET (p. 16)

This poem expresses Tennyson's early ideas concerning his life mission. Later he would not have desired rites and forms to melt "before his eyes," because he came to regard them as necessary and felt that they should be modified or superseded very slowly. Cf. *You Ask Me, Why*, p. 35; *Of Old Sat Freedom*, p. 35; *Love Thou Thy Land*, p. 36; *In Memoriam*, 33, p. 65; and *Freedom*, p. 155.

### THE LADY OF SHALOTT (p. 18)

This is Tennyson's first published poem on an Arthurian subject. The source of the poem is an Italian romance, *Donna di Scalotta* (Lady of Scalott). Tennyson says that he substituted *Shalott* for *Scalott* because of the softer sound. The word is the same as *Astolat*, the name of the heroine's home in Malory's version of the story in *Morte Darthur*, which was Tennyson's source for the idyll *Lancelot and Elaine* (p. 120). Tennyson stated that the key to the symbolical meaning of *The Lady of Shalott* is found in the closing lines of Part 2: "The new-born love for something, for someone in the wide world from which she has been so long excluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities." The poem was first published in 1832; it was virtually rewritten in 1842 with many modifications and improvements and with great gain in poetic dignity. The wealth of sensuous beauty in the poem suggests Keats.

### MARIANA IN THE SOUTH (p. 20)

This poem is a variation of the theme of *Mariana*, p. 14. The scenery, however, is different, that of the second poem suggesting Egypt, Italy, the Pyrenees, and France. In the precision with which details are introduced, both poems anticipate the Pre-Raphaelite movement. (See Critical Notes on Rossetti, page 1008.)

### ŒNONE (p. 20)

This is one of Tennyson's poems on classical themes. Others are *The Lotos-Eaters* (p. 28), *Ulysses* (p. 43), and *Tithonus* (p. 44). In these poems Tennyson exhibits greater creative power than in his intendedly realistic English idylls *Dora* (p. 41), *The Gardener's Daughter*, etc. The story of Œnone is found in Ovid, Euripides, and other classical writers. Although the poem is classical in theme and outline, it is modern in sentiment; the speech of Pallas (lines 142 ff.) expresses Tennyson's own philosophy of life. The descriptions of scenery in the poem belong to the Pyrenees Mountains, visited by Tennyson in 1830, rather than to Mt. Ida. Part of *Œnone* was written in the valley of Cauteretz, in the Pyrenees.

### THE PALACE OF ART (p. 24)

This poem is consciously didactic. It is an allegory embodying the poet's belief that "the Godlike life is with man and for man." Tennyson had high ethical impulses and was always concerned with questions involving the conduct of life. Like Wordsworth he wished "to be regarded as a teacher or as nothing." The poem teaches that qualities of mind and heart, noble in themselves, become ignoble unless they are shared with others.

The poem contains a series of notable descriptions, each one conceived as a finished picture—clear and distinct, and yet rich and suggestive.

### LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE (p. 27)

This poem illustrates a curious obsession of Tennyson—a sentimental interest in a poor youth who loves above his station and fortune. The vigorous expression of current democratic sympathies won instant popularity for the poem, although at heart Tennyson was a conservative. Cf. *You Ask Me, Why*, p. 35.

### THE LOTOS-EATERS (p. 28)

The Lotos-Eaters were a people who lived on the flowery fruit of the lotos tree, which produced forgetfulness of home. The poem is based upon a brief passage in Book 9 of Homer's *Odyssey*, which tells how Ulysses and his mariners came to the land of the lotos-eaters and how Ulysses escaped by binding his men to the boats. The underlying theme of the poem is similar to that of *The Palace of Art*, p. 24.

### YOU ASK ME, WHY, THOUGH ILL AT EASE (p. 35)

This poem and the two following poems show Tennyson's interest in contemporary political and social questions. Being a conservative, the poet had little sympathy with current reforms, at home or abroad, especially those which were promoted by over-zealous factions and which involved haste.

Aubrey de Vere states that the first two poems were probably suggested by some popular demonstration connected with the rejection of the Reform Bill of 1832 by the House of Lords. (See *Memoir*, I, 506).

### MORTE D'ARTHUR (p. 38)

This poem was written and published before Tennyson had conceived the plan for *The Idylls of the King*. It is pure narrative, without allegorical intent. It was later incorporated, with additions, in *The Passing of Arthur*, the last of the *Idylls*. The source of the poem is Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*, Book 21.

W. S. Landor, who saw the poem in 1837, said, "It is more Homeric than any poem of our time, and rivals some of the noblest parts of the Odyssea."

For a full statement regarding *The Idylls of the King*, see pp. 962-964.

### DORA (p. 41)

This poem is one of Tennyson's English idylls, a group of poems concerning simple country or village life. It was suggested by the pastoral "Dora Creswell" in Miss Mitford's *Our Village*, a series of sketches published 1824-32. Tennyson made Dora a woman instead of a girl, and modified the ending and other features of the original. He states that since the poem is a tale of a nobly simple country girl, it "had to be told in the simplest possible poetic language, and therefore was one of the poems which gave most trouble" (*Memoir*, I, 196). The poem should be compared with Wordsworth's *Michael* and the story of Margaret in *The Excursion*, Bk. I.

### ULYSSES (p. 43)

Ulysses is the hero of Homer's *Odyssey*, but Tennyson's poem is based upon a passage in Canto 26 of Dante's *Inferno*, in which Ulysses tells Dante and Virgil how he had set out from Circe's island, driven by an ardor to gain experience of the world, with one vessel only and a small group of loyal companions. They were old and slow when they came to the Straits of Gibraltar, in ancient imaginings the strait that marked the limit of the world, beyond which none might go. "O brothers," said Ulysses to his mariners, "who through a thousand perils have reached the West, to this so little vigil of your senses that remains be ye unwilling to deny the experience, following the sun, of the world that hath no people. Consider ye your origin; ye were not made to live as brutes, but for pursuit of virtue and knowledge." Unlike Dante, however, Tennyson has Ulysses start from his home in Ithaca.

Tennyson says that the poem was written soon after the death of his friend Arthur Hallam, and gave expression to the poet's need of "going forward and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in *In Memoriam*" (*Memoir*, I, 196).

Critics have been generous in their praise of this poem, emphasis being placed especially upon its dignity and nobility of conception, its beauty and power of expression, and its imaginative fervor. The reading of this poem and of *Locksley Hall* is said to have led Sir Robert Peel to give Tennyson a pension in 1845.

Cf. Hotspur's famous lines in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, Part One, V, 2, 82 ff.—

"O gentlemen, the time of life is short!
To spend that shortness basely were too long,
If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour."

### LOCKSLEY HALL (p. 45)

The speaker in this poem is a young man whose love had been denied by a woman of superior fortune. The theme is an obsession with Tennyson. The poem is full of allusions to recent discoveries in astronomy and electricity and to current social problems. Cf. the sequel, *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, p. 157, in which the same character appears as an old man whose experience has mellowed his outlook upon life, which with him concerns the actual and present—with all its defects—rather than a vague dream of future progress.

"The second Locksley Hall is, despite a certain falling off in technical skill, still substantially the fulfillment of the first. Whatever unhealthiness exists in the latest poem, is in germ in the original one, and, on the whole, the new poem, notwithstanding a number of frantic opinions and of unpleasant lines, is healthier, more manly, more devout, and even more cheerful, in a deeper sense of the word cheerful, than was the first poem. Neither poem is truly sound. Both suffer from the same disease. Both illustrate Tennyson's characteristic weakness [romantic idealism]. But of the two the old man's poem, if artistically inferior, is ethically higher, and for this reason is far more satisfying."—J. Royce, *Studies of Good and Evil*, p. 77.

### SIR GALAHAD (p. 50)

Galahad, the son of Lancelot and Elaine (the daughter of King Pelleas, not the maid of Astolat), takes the place of Percivale in the later legends of the quest for the Holy Grail. The Grail, originally a magic vessel of Celtic mythology, became, under the influence of the church, the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper, and in which Christ's blood was caught by Joseph of Arimathea at the Crucifixion. The cup was supposed to have been brought to Glastonbury, England, by Joseph. It was visible only to the pure in heart, and vanished when approached by any other. In medieval romances the finding of the Grail was the great aim of many knights, but Sir Galahad was the only one who achieved the quest. For various accounts of the quest, see Tennyson's *The Holy Grail*, p. 137. Sir Galahad is here portrayed as a mystic—a religious knight. He is the counterpart of the nun in *St. Agnes' Eve*, p. 35.

**Page 51, lines 69-72.** This passage describes an experience familiar to Tennyson himself, one which he calls "a kind of waking trance, I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone" (*Memoir*, I, 320). In *The Holy Grail*, 907-915 (p. 147), the experience is transferred to King Arthur. Cf. *In Memoriam*, 95, p. 80.

### THE VISION OF SIN (p. 51)

This poem presents two contrasted revels: the first, a drunken orgy in a palace; the second, a senile debauch in a ruined inn. The youth has wasted his life in pleasure, and the end is sorrow and despair; but Tennyson represents God as holding out the promise of something better. It was the sins of youth that filled the second great circle of Dante's *Inferno* with countless multitudes.

### THE PRINCESS (p. 54)

*The Princess*, first published in 1847, is a half-serious, half-burlesque narrative poem. It tells the story of a princess who founded a college for the purpose of emancipating woman by educating her in complete isolation from man. The prince and two of his companions disguise themselves as girls and gain admission to the college, but are finally discovered and ejected. The father of the prince prepares to attack the college with an army, and warriors rush to the defense of the princess and her maidens. A combat is arranged between fifty followers of each side, and the prince is defeated. Finally the princess is overcome with sympathy for the wounded prince and gives up her purpose, and marries him.

The central idea of the poem asserts the supremacy of normal human affections over any arbitrary or mechanical scheme to suppress them. This idea is emphasized by the presence of a child in the college, the daughter of one of the chief women. The princess develops a genuine affection for the child, which she holds in her arms during the tournament, and which links her with true womanhood. It was to bring the child still more into prominence that additional songs were inserted between the parts of the poem in the edition of 1850. Of this latter group Tennyson wrote to S. E. Dawson in 1882: "I may tell you that the songs were not an afterthought. Before the first edition came out, I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs in between the separate divisions of the poem; again I thought the poem will explain itself; but the public did not see that the child, as you say, was the heroine of the piece, and at last I conquered my laziness and inserted them." In the poem the songs appear without titles.

The following songs appeared in the original edition: *Tears, Idle Tears; O Swallow, Swallow; Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal;* and *Come Down, O Maid.*

### TEARS, IDLE TEARS (p. 55)

Tennyson stated to James Knowles that this song was written at Tintern Abbey "when the woods were all yellowing with autumn seen through the ruined windows. It is what I have always felt even from a boy, and what as a boy I called the 'passion of the past.' And so it is always with me now; it is the distance that charms me in the landscape, the picture and the past, and not the immediate today in which I move."—*Nineteenth Century*, Jan., 1893.

### IN MEMORIAM (p. 57)

This poem was written in memory of Tennyson's dearest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, the gifted son of the famous historian Henry Hallam. Arthur Hallam was born in London, Feb. 1, 1811. He became acquainted with Tennyson at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1828, where they belonged to the same club—The Apostles—and the two promising youths soon became devoted friends. They made summer trips together—to the Pyrenees in 1830, and down the Rhine in 1832. The intimacy increased when Hallam became engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily. After graduation Hallam began the study of law with his father in London. He visited the Continent in August, 1833, and died suddenly in Vienna on Sept. 15. His body was taken to England and buried on Jan. 3, 1834, in the chancel of Clevedon Church, in Somersetshire.

The action of the poem covers less than five years, beginning with the death of Hallam in the fall of 1833 and extending into the spring of 1838. The lyrics, written without any view of weaving them into a whole, were composed over a period of seventeen years and reveal various degrees of sorrow and various attitudes toward life, death, and immortality. The opening section, which stresses Tennyson's final conviction that faith alone can discover the eternal purpose of God and solve the problem of immortality, was written last.

Tennyson said of the poem: "It must be remembered that this is a poem, *not* an actual biography. . . . It was meant to be a kind of *Divina Comedia*, ending with happiness . . . The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through Faith in a God of Love. *I* is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him" (*Memoir*, I, 304-305).

Although the ideas concerning philosophy and natural science, as they appear in the poem, are derived from contemporary thought, as Frederic Harrison and others point out, *In Memoriam* voices universal emotions and so deserves the immense influence it has exerted over the religious world. Henry van Dyke ranks the poem as "the greatest elegy of the nineteenth century, the longest and most important of Tennyson's poems on the problems of doubt and faith, the poem in which he made the strongest and widest impression on contemporary thought."

The stanza form, which Tennyson at first believed was his own invention, was used in the Elizabethan period by Sidney, Jonson, and others, and by a number of later poets. Tennyson had used it before in *Love Thou Thy Land*, p. 36, and other poems.

The main divisions of the poem are marked by the three Christmas sections—28, 78, and 104. Tennyson suggested nine groups of the sections as follows: 1-8; 9-20; 21-27; 28-49; 50-58; 59-71; 72-98; 99-103; 104-131. The turning-point in the poem, where sorrow gives way to joy, may be placed at section 85.

*In Memoriam* should be compared with Milton's *Lycidas*, Shelley's *Adonais*, and Arnold's *Thyrsis*, p. 477.

### MAUD (p. 96)

Tennyson regarded *Maud* as one of his masterpieces; it was his favorite poem for reading aloud. He said of it: "This poem is a little *Hamlet*, the history of a morbid poetic soul, under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age. He is the heir of madness, an egotist with the makings of a cynic, raised to sanity by a pure and holy love which elevates his whole nature, passing from the height of triumph to the lowest depth of misery, driven into madness by the loss of her whom he has loved, and, when he has at length passed through the fiery furnace, and has recovered his reason, giving himself up to work for the good of mankind through the unselfishness born of his great passion . . . The peculiarity of this poem is that different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters" (*Memoir*, I, 396).

"As a masterpiece of rhythm," writes J. C. Collins, the poem "must rank among the wonders of art"; but it was greeted with hostile criticism by many of Tennyson's contemporaries, and some later critics have regarded it as a "splendid failure."

**Page 110. Part II, Section IV.** Tennyson regarded this lyric as "the most touching of his works," and Swinburne called it "the poem of deepest charm and fullest delight of pathos and melody ever written by Mr. Tennyson." A version of this section first appeared as "Stanzas" in a volume entitled *The Tribute*, published in 1837. It has been stated that *Maud* grew out of a suggestion of Sir John Simeon regarding this early poem—that to make it fully intelligible a preceding poem was necessary. —*Memoir*, I, 379. See note on *In the Garden at Swainston*, p. 119.

### MILTON (p. 114)

Tennyson thought Milton superior to Virgil as a stylist and said that there was nothing in English to equal the splendor of his finest passages. This poem is one of a group which Tennyson called "experiments in quantity." It imitates, as far as can be done in English, a classical form of prosody invented by Alcaeus, a Greek lyric poet of 600 B.C., and used by Horace and other ancient poets. In English prosody, a four-line strophe of one form of alcaics may be scanned thus—

⏑ — ⏑ — ⏓ ‖ — ⏑ ⏑ — ⏑ ⏑
⏑ — ⏑ — ⏓ ‖ — ⏑ ⏑ — ⏑ ⏑
⏑ — ⏑ — ‖ ⏑ — ⏑ — ⏑
— ⏑ ⏑ — ⏑ ⏑ ‖ — ⏑ — ⏑

### THE HIGHER PANTHEISM (p. 118)

Pantheism identifies the universe, taken as a whole, with God; it asserts that the combined forces and laws manifested in the universe are God. The poem expresses what Tennyson regards as a higher truth than this doctrine; it declares that God lives in the world, but transcends it; that men have their being in him, but that the human spirit is consciously distinct from the Divine Spirit.

Hallam Tennyson writes of his father: "He said again to us with deep feeling in January, 1869: 'Yes, it is true that there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend upon it, the Spiritual *is* the real; it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot. You may tell me that my hand and my foot are only imaginary symbols of my existence, I could believe you; but you never, never can convince me that the *I* is not an eternal Reality, and that the Spiritual is not the true and real part of me' " (*Memoir*, II, 90).

### THE IDYLLS OF THE KING (p. 119)

*The Idylls of the King* consists of twelve narratives that deal with the history of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

The first important treatment of Arthur appears in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniæ* (1147), which purports to tell the story of the British kings from the founding of Britain to the year 689. Arthur there appears as the great chieftain who defended his country against the invading Saxons. Geoffrey's work became a storehouse for other writers, who made the material widely known. Of the medieval poets who treated the Arthur story, Layamon (c.1200) was the first to make Arthur the hero of the English, as distinct from the Welsh, people; he also gave for the first time a full account of the founding of the Round Table and of the death of Arthur. In the fifteenth century Sir Thomas Malory selected material from various earlier sources and produced a complete history of the Knights of the Round Table from the birth of Arthur to his last great battle and death. He made Arthur the great central figure of a unified narrative, and his *Morte Darthur* became at once the great treasury of Arthurian romance.

When a mere boy Tennyson happened upon Malory's book and he at once became interested in the Arthurian legend. In 1832 he published *The Lady of Shalott* (p. 18), his first Arthur poem. Other early poems dealing with the material were *Morte d'Arthur* (p. 38), *Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere*, and *Sir Galahad* (p. 50).

The material for all but two of the Idylls was gained from Malory's *Morte Darthur*, published in 1485. For *The Marriage of Geraint* and *Geraint and Enid* Tennyson used *The Mabinogion*, a collection of old Welsh tales translated by Lady Charlotte Guest and published in 1838-49. Tennyson made many changes in his material to suit his allegorical intent and unified it around the rise and fall of the Round Table; besides, he embroidered it at various points, sentimentalized it, and made the characters, incidents, and language more decorous.

Although the writing of the Idylls was not completed until 1885, as early as 1835 Tennyson projected a possible allegorical scheme for the story of Arthur. In the final section, *To the Queen* (p. 147), he states that the poems constitute an

"old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul."

The progress of the twelve Idylls (as arranged in their final order in 1888) corresponds to the course of the months and seasons of the year, from the coming of Guinevere in the spring, through the knightly successes of summer, to the Last Tournament in autumn, and to Arthur's last battle in December. Since the composition of the poems extended over so long a period, and since the final order is not the exact order of writing, the symbolism is sometimes faint and incomplete.

Opinion differs as to the merit of the *Idylls*, the best known and the most read of Tennyson's longer poems. Many persons regard them as the highest achievement of the poet's art and look upon them as "a wonderful monument of sustained and chastened fancy, of noble ideals, and of delicious music." Others with Frederic Harrison think there is "too much pure fancy, too much sentiment, too much of the drawing-room and the lecture-hall." "In choosing as his theme," adds Harrison, "a well-known romance, adapting and developing a very grand old prose-poem, Tennyson obtained the great advantage of incidents living, thrilling, and even familiar," but he ran the risk of "travestying the old romance, so that it became more or less incongruous, unnatural, and impossible. Lovers of exquisite verse and of romantic chivalry, who know nothing either of historic chivalry or of the mediæval romances, do not feel the incongruity; and they form the great majority of the Tennysonian public. But from the point of view of actual history and the real Arthurian myth, the filling of the old bottle of Malory with the new wine of Alfred Tennyson is an inevitable danger. Lancelot of the Lake is transformed into a sort of Sir Charles Grandison in plate armor; King Arthur becomes a courtier's portrait of the late Prince Consort. Elaine is a new Virginie without her 'Paul,' and Queen Guinevere is a magnificent 'grande dame' of Versailles with a secret."—*Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill, and Other Literary Estimates* (1900), p. 17.

Following is a list of the poems in their final order, and the dates of their original publication:

*Dedication*, 1862
*The Coming of Arthur*, 1869
*Gareth and Lynette*, 1872
*The Marriage of Geraint*, 1857
*Geraint and Enid*, 1857
*Balin and Balan*, 1885
*Merlin and Vivien*, 1857
*Lancelot and Elaine*, 1859
*The Holy Grail*, 1869
*Pelleas and Ettarre*, 1869
*The Last Tournament*, 1871
*Guinevere*, 1859
*The Passing of Arthur*, 1842 (1869)
*To the Queen*, 1872

## SUMMARY OF THE IDYLLS OF THE KING

### *The Coming of Arthur*

*The Coming of Arthur* relates how Arthur, son of Uther, legendary king of the Britons, wooed the princess Guinevere (daughter of Leodogran, king of Cameliard) and won her as his wife. Indirectly we are also told how Arthur was secretly reared by the wizard Merlin, how at a strategic moment Merlin set him on Uther's throne and proclaimed him king, and how Arthur had dedicated himself to the high purpose of making chaotic Britain a coherent and law-abiding nation. For this end he had gathered about him his Round Table, a body of knights exemplifying the finest qualities of chivalry. Chief among them was the great Lancelot, Arthur's friend; it was he whom Arthur sent to escort Guinevere from her home in Cameliard to Camelot for the marriage. At the close of the idyll, the reign of law in Britain has well begun; yet in the background lurks the figure of Modred, Arthur's traitorous nephew, from the beginning intent on working harm.

In the four subsequent tales, the Round Table is at the peak of its achievement.

### *Gareth and Lynette*

*Gareth and Lynette* tells how young Gareth, nephew of King Arthur, longed to leave his home and prove himself at Arthur's court. His mother, loving and fearful, strove to keep him with her; yet his persistence persuaded her at last to let him go, on condition that he, disguised, serve a year in Arthur's kitchen before asking for knighthood. With his identity at Camelot concealed from all but Arthur, Gareth endured his position and by his industry and cheerfulness won the respect of Arthur, who promised him an early opportunity to show his true worth. That opportunity came with the arrival of the fair but sharp-tongued Lynette, with the request that Arthur send a knight to liberate her sister from captivity. When Gareth, still in his kitchen-clothes, was given the quest, she was indignant; and her indignation continued for many a long mile on the journey to her sister's castle. Finally, however, Gareth's good-natured humility under her scornful sarcasm, and his prowess in overcoming successive foes, symbolizing the terrors of life and death, won her gradual admiration and at length her love.

### *The Marriage of Geraint*

*The Marriage of Geraint* describes another sort of courtship—how the polished and handsome Geraint met and loved humble Enid. Riding on a quest to chastise a discourteous knight, Geraint asked lodging for the night at a ruined castle. Signs of poverty were everywhere, but what little the inmates of the castle had they offered to Geraint with a cheeriness and graciousness that won his heart. Especially was he pleased with Enid, the daughter of his host. Her faded gown and the menial tasks that she performed could not obscure her charm. In the course of an evening during which Geraint followed Enid everywhere with his eyes, he learned that the discourteous knight whom he had come to chastise was the one who had reduced his host to his present poverty, that a tournament was to be held the next day in which he would have an opportunity to meet his foe, but that he must be accompanied by a lady in order to enter the tournament. Impulsively Geraint proposed that he satisfy this requirement by taking Enid with him as his destined bride. The parents were overjoyed at so high an alliance for Enid; she, shrinking at first from the suddenness of the proposal, saw it also as an honor, and obeyed. In the tournament, Geraint was victor; the title and lands of Enid's father were restored; and Enid prepared for the journey to Camelot and her marriage by exchanging her old garments for more new and splendid ones. But Geraint insisted that she ride with him in her ancient gown; and she, obedient, complied.

### *Geraint and Enid*

*Geraint and Enid* portrays Enid as the ideal wife and Geraint as a very human husband. Alarmed by the influence which the growing intimacy between Lancelot and Guinevere might have on Enid's mind, Geraint took Enid from the Court to his own country. There he lost himself in the pleasures of marriage; giving up his mighty exercises, he lived only for Enid. Far from being joyful at Geraint's exclusive devotion, Enid became increasingly distressed, and felt herself the cause of his inaction. Her distress was at last apparent to Geraint; misinterpreting it as a sign that she loved him no longer, he angrily donned his armor and left the castle, ordering Enid to ride before him and not to speak to him whatever might betide. Enid obeyed, except when Geraint's safety was concerned; twice, much to his ostensible anger, she spoke to warn him against foes in the path. As they rode on, Geraint's impulsive anger began to ebb in spite of his efforts to preserve it, until he almost forgot to berate Enid when she disobeyed his command once more to warn him of a plot against his life. In the next encounter Geraint was seriously wounded; when he woke from his swoon to find Enid weeping over him, he found his anger wholly gone. The tale ends with Enid mounted behind Geraint on his great charger, complete confidence established between them as a result of their adventures together, and Geraint's life again made purposeful. They lived on together, in their own land, united in a resolve to coöperate with Arthur in making England a peaceful and compact society.

### *Balin and Balan*

In *Balin and Balan* the interest of the story centers in Balin, surnamed "the Savage," who came to Camelot, in the company of his older and more developed brother Balan, to acquire courtesy as a cure for the violent moods that often assailed him. For a time the influence of Lancelot and Guinevere, whom he worshiped as examples of the perfect courtesy that he lacked, succeeded in holding his roughness in check; but when his brother, going on a quest to rid a forest of a demon that haunted it, left him alone, he came to despair of attaining an ideal too high above him. He credited, too, scandalous stories about the relationship of Lancelot and Guinevere which

Vivien, the "wily wanton" of the Court and Merlin's mistress, came to Camelot to spread. Discouraged and disillusioned, he rode impetuously out from Camelot, and met, as the first victim of his rage, his own brother, who took him for the demon he had gone out to subdue. Without recognizing each other, they fought, and died tragically at each other's hands.

### *Merlin and Vivien*

The snake in the paradise of Camelot, the enchantress Vivien, found another victim in the crafty Merlin, the magician and the prophet of the Court, as the tale of *Merlin and Vivien* relates. During his long life Merlin had attained fame and had become invaluable to the state through his supernatural wisdom and foresight. Yet the evil charm of Vivien was more than his wisdom could conquer. Even though he saw through her wiles and understood the consequences of yielding to her desires, his emotions overbore his reason. Thus beguiled, he revealed to Vivien the charm that was the secret of his power, and she immediately used it upon him,

> And in the hollow oak he lay as dead,
> And lost to life and use and name and fame.

### *Lancelot and Elaine*

Two tragedies are related in the Idyll of *Lancelot and Elaine.* In the one, the lovable Elaine, who had been brought up in seclusion, saw the great Lancelot, adored him, guarded his shield as he rode away to fight in disguise at Camelot, nursed him after he had been wounded, offered her love to him, found her love hopeless, and died like a wilting flower. The other tragedy is that of Lancelot, whom, had it not been for his unfortunate vows exchanged with Guinevere, Elaine could have made happy.

### *The Holy Grail*

The disintegration of the Table Round, foreshadowed in previous tales, proceeds in *The Holy Grail.* Here the force that undermines the stability of the society which Arthur has established is religious fervor. Carried away by their desire for an unearthly holiness that only a few unusual men could attain, the knights of Arthur let the kingdom shift for itself while they rode away to seek the Grail. Galahad, the pure, sought and attained. Percival and Bors caught glimpses of the splendor. Lancelot was kept by his sinful love of Guinevere from realizing a holiness that, in his great sincerity of heart, he much desired. Gawain and the other knights merely wasted their efforts in a quest beyond their scope; meanwhile Camelot crumbled into ruins, and the kingdom of God on earth suffered from the absence of those who should have maintained it.

### *Pelleas and Ettarre*

The story of *Pelleas and Ettarre* gives further indication that the ideals of faithfulness and purity on which the stability of the Table Round depended were losing their strength. The young Pelleas, inexperienced and idealistic, believed that all men, like Lancelot, were loyal, and all women, like Guinevere, were pure. His first disillusionment came from loving the self-centered Ettarre, who accepted his devotion only until he had won for her in a tournament the title of "Queen of Beauty," and then scorned him utterly. Trusting Gawain to plead his cause before Ettarre, Pelleas suffered another disillusionment in discovering that Gawain used the mission as a pretext for winning Ettarre's love for himself; and the later discovery that Lancelot and Guinevere were also guilty effectually destroyed his faith in humanity. Maddened, Pelleas, rushed to Camelot, fought with Lancelot, and, though defeated, made the lovers feel his scorn. "And each foresaw the dolorous day to be."

### *The Last Tournament*

The love of Lancelot for Guinevere is ironically paralleled, in *The Last Tournament,* by the love of Tristram for Isolt, wife of King Mark of Cornwall. Lancelot and Guinevere, however guilty, were still noble; Tristram loved Isolt, abandoned her to marry in Brittany, and then returned, lured by the memory of Isolt's black eyes. On the way, he stopped at Camelot, where he found Arthur's court changed from its ancient purity into a place of lightness and revelry, observed the unhappiness of Lancelot and Guinevere in having, by their unwitting example, led the world astray, saw Arthur baffled by the failure of his ideals, and won, in a last tournament, a string of rubies for his love. Riding on, he came to Tintagel and Isolt. She reproached him for his treason, hated and yet loved him; he placed the rubies around her neck and sang her a last song before the sword of King Mark struck him down from behind.

### *Guinevere*

In *Guinevere* the end of the Table Round has come. Before the opening of the tale, Modred had forced upon Arthur the knowledge of Lancelot's love for Guinevere, Lancelot had fled to France, Arthur had pursued him, and Modred had seized the kingdom in Arthur's absence. To escape Modred, Guinevere took refuge in a house of nuns at Almesbury, sorrowing for her part in the disruption of the kingdom, goaded to despair by the innocent prattling of a novice with her tales of the wicked queen. There Arthur came to take a last farewell before his battle with the traitors. As, noble in his sorrow, Arthur stood before her, reproachful but forgiving, Guinevere for the first time realized that she loved him with a higher love than ever she had loved Lancelot. But the discovery came too late.

### *The Passing of Arthur*

*The Passing of Arthur* records the last great battle between the remnant of the Round Table and the rebels under Modred, the destruction of both armies, the death of Modred at Arthur's hand, the fatal wounding of Arthur, and the last scene of his life when only Bedivere is left with him. Wishing to restore his mystic sword Excalibur to the Lady of the Lake, from whom it had come, Arthur commanded Bedivere to throw it into the waters; twice the beauty of the sword lured Bedivere to disobey; the third time he flung it to a white arm that appeared to seize it. Remorseful for his delay, Bedivere then carried Arthur to the edge of the sea. There came a barge, and in the barge three queens, who received the king and bore him out of Bedivere's sight to Avalon, the happy island of the blessed. As he went, Arthur gave as a last word the hope that the order of the future might accomplish what the old order had nobly attempted—to subdue the bestial element in man and to make society coherent and high-minded.

### LANCELOT AND ELAINE (p. 120)

Lancelot, the son of King Ban of Brittany, was stolen in infancy by Vivien, the Lady of the Lake, who threw him into the water; hence he was called Lancelot of the Lake. His guilty love for Guinevere, wife of King Arthur, was the initial cause of the disruption of the court. Astolat, the home of Elaine, according to Malory was Guildford, in Surrey. The poem is based upon Malory's *Morte Darthur*, Book 18, ch. 8-20.

This poem should be compared with *The Lady of Shalott*, p. 18.

**Page 136, line 1418.** Malory relates that when Lancelot heard of the last great battle, in which Arthur was wounded, he set out to seek forgiveness for the wrong done his king. But he was too late; Arthur was dead. After uttering a devout prayer for Arthur's soul, Lancelot sought Guinevere. He found her in a nunnery at Almesbury, and after taking a last farewell of her he expressed repentance in a lonely chapel and thereafter led a life of prayer and fasting. When Guinevere died, Lancelot buried her by the side of King Arthur in Glastonbury Abbey. Thereafter he refused food and drink, and within a few weeks he died.

### THE HOLY GRAIL (p. 137)

For a statement regarding the origin and the significance of the Grail see Critical Note on *Sir Galahad*, p. 960.

Tennyson represents the quest for the Holy Grail by the multitude as mistaken zeal. The quest is properly reserved for a select few. The source of the poem is Malory's *Morte Darthur*, Books 11-17.

**Page 142, lines 489-539.** Stopford Brooke says of this passage: "In conception, in invention, in description of invented landscape, and in artistic word, this passing of Galahad is splendidly written. . . . This great and lofty vision of the glory of the pure spiritual life, refined and thrilled by heavenly holiness into full union with the world beyond the sense, and needing no death to enter into the perfect life, is done as no one has done this kind of work since Dante."—*Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life*, p. 327.

Tennyson regarded this passage and lines 763-849 as among the best blank verse he ever wrote.

### THE REVENGE (p. 151)

The main source of this poem was a report of the famous battle written in 1591 by Sir Walter Raleigh, a cousin of Grenville, the hero of the incident. Stevenson calls the poem "one of the noblest ballads in the English language." Cf. Browning's *Hervé Riel*, p. 343.

Sir Richard Grenville was a British naval hero of the 16th century. In 1585 he had charge of a fleet that set out to colonize Virginia. In 1591 he was put in command of *The Revenge*, one of the best ships in the small fleet under Lord Thomas Howard sent to the Azores, islands west of Portugal, to intercept the Spanish treasure-ships returning from the West Indies. The king of Spain sent a powerful fleet of 53 warships against the English. The Earl of Cumberland, coasting along Portugal, sent a warning to Howard as he lay at anchor off Flores, the most westerly island of the Azores. Howard escaped with five of the six ships, but Grenville delayed to take his sick men aboard. He then tried to pass through the entire Spanish fleet, and the fight occurred. It lasted fifteen hours, and Grenville surrendered only after all but twenty of his men were killed. He was mortally wounded in the fight and died a few days later.

### RIZPAH (p. 153)

This poem was suggested by a story, found in a current magazine, of a young man who had been hanged in chains in the 18th century for robbing the mail (*Memoir*, II, 250). The date 17—, prefixed to the poem, places the poem as of the 18th century, when it was the custom for bodies of criminals to be left hanging until they became skeletons.

The title of the poem is biblical, being taken from *2 Samuel*, 21:8-10.—"The king took the two sons of Rizpah, . . . and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord . . . And Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, took sackcloth and spread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night."

The poem is a dramatic monologue spoken by a mad mother, on her deathbed in the hospital, to a visiting lady.

### VASTNESS (p. 156)

No conviction was so constantly forced upon Tennyson as that expressed in the theme of this poem. He said: "What matters anything in this world without full faith in the Immortality of the Soul and of Love?"—*Memoir*, II, 343. Cf. *In Memoriam*, Section 34, p. 65, and *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*, 60-72, p. 158.

The style of this poem and of *To Virgil*, which resembles that of Whitman, is unusual in Tennyson.

### AKBAR'S DREAM (p. 166)

Akbar was the great Mogul ruler of India from 1565 to 1605. He invented a religion that aimed to incorporate the best of all beliefs. In the poem he relates a dream about building a temple where all people of all creeds might worship and in which might dwell "Truth, and Peace, and Love, and Justice." He saw himself killed and the temple destroyed; he saw also some people come from the west who restored toleration and abolished objectionable practices. The "Hymn," addressed to the sun, stands at the end of the poem.

## ROBERT BROWNING
## (1812-1889), p. 166

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Browning (1812-89) was descended on his father's side from English-Creole stock, his grandfather having married Margaret Tittle, a Creole from the West Indies. His mother was the daughter of a Hamburg German who married a Scottish woman and settled in Dundee, Scotland. Until the age of twenty-one Browning lived in Camberwell, on the outskirts of London. Except for two unimportant years in the University of London, his principal education came from private tutors and from his father, a well-to-do official of the Bank of England, who dabbled pleasantly in arts and letters, and who had gathered about him a library of six thousand volumes, most of which Browning soon mastered. His taste for painting and music, as well as for poetry and the theater, was developed in early years; then, as always, he lived vigorously. Byron was the first model for Browning's attempts at verse; when he was fourteen, he discovered Shelley's *Queen Mab* in a bookshop; with his mother's help he acquired Shelley's complete works, and under this influence wrote his *Pauline* (1833). While on a visit to St. Petersburg, Russia, in the winter of 1833, he wrote *Porphyria's Lover* and *Johannes Agricola*, the earliest of his dramatic lyrics.

During the next two years Browning's tendencies in thought and art underwent a considerable change. He was too independent and original of mind to be imitative long. His next poem, *Paracelsus* (1835), was abstruse in theme and manner, dramatic rather than lyric in its method, a psychological study and a defense of an ethical principle; it marked, therefore, the direction that Browning's later poetry was to take. At the suggestion of the actor Macready, Browning now tried his hand at drama and wrote *Strafford* (1837), a tragedy that proved poorly adapted to the stage. Meanwhile, he had spent two years in Italy, where he acquired local color and background for his long poem *Sordello* (1840) and became enamored of the country and interested in her struggle for liberty from Austria. *Sordello*, the most difficult of Browning's poems to read because of its intricacies of style and phrasing, gave the author an unfortunate reputation for obscurity and lost him for nearly twenty years the sympathy of English readers. During the next six years Browning published a series entitled *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841-46), in which in drama, lyric, and romance, he struck the note that was to dominate the rest of his poetry. The dramas in the series, including *Pippa Passes* (1841), *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* (1843), *Colombe's Birthday* (1844), and *A Soul's Tragedy* (1846), were hardly more successful as plays than *Strafford;* but in the short dramatic monologues, including such poems as *In a Gondola, Pictor Ignotus, The Tomb at St. Praxed's*, and the first part of *Saul* (which combined the psychological acuteness of *Sordello* with the objective directness of his plays), Browning had at last found his proper field.

Browning was not yet a popular poet when he was prompted, by reading a volume of poems published in 1844, to write its author, Miss Elizabeth Barrett, a letter of praise. She replied; other letters, a meeting, and an engagement followed. In spite of the obstacles due to her physical weakness and the opposition of her father, they were married in 1846 and went to Italy. The experience returned Mrs. Browning to at least partial health; a son was born, and she lived for fifteen years to give Browning happiness and encouragement. Their home, with the exception of visits in England and France, was the villa of Casa Guidi in Florence. Care for Mrs. Browning's health, the entertainment of interesting visitors from England and America, excursions into art and music, kept Browning from writing extended poems; but the series of shorter dramatic monologues published in 1850 and 1855 marked in many ways the summit of his achievement.

The death of Mrs. Browning in 1861 changed the current of Browning's life. With great difficulty he overcame an impulse to live in unproductive solitude; returning to England, he assumed the responsibility of educating his son, and began by degrees to find pleasure in his friendships, especially those with women. *The Ring and the Book*, which had been conceived before Mrs. Browning's death, as the result of finding the record of a 17th century murder-trial for sale in the Florentine market-place, occupied his time for some years and was at last published in 1868 and 1869. The interest in Greek literature which had been encouraged by Mrs. Browning's devotion to Euripides resulted in a series of poems on classical subjects from 1871 to 1877. In the last years of his life, his long-deferred popularity enlarged his contacts with the social and artistic life of his time. He regarded with somewhat amused tolerance the formation of Browning Clubs in England and America dedicated to his adulation. His later poetry consisted of realistic dramas in verse, such as *The Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* (1873) and *The Inn Album* (1875), or poems in which his political and ethical opinions were conveyed, with great indirectness and subtlety, through the self-confession of a protagonist, as in *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* (1871) and *Fifine at the Fair* (1872). The difficulty of these poems staggered his admirers but could not wholly discourage them. His friendship with Miss Egerton-Smith was the Indian summer of his life, ended by her sudden death in 1877. His last two years he spent at Asolo, where he had written *Pippa Passes* during his first visit to Italy, and at Venice, where his son, now married, had a villa and studio. There he died in 1889. His last poems, collected under the title of *Asolando* (1890), showed that his vigor of mind and his great courage were unabated to the end.

Browning's principal publications were: *Pauline*, 1833; *Paracelsus*, 1836; *Strafford*, 1837; *Sordello*, 1840; *Bells and Pomegranates*, 1841-46; *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*, 1850; *In a Balcony*, 1855; *Men and Women*, 1855; *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864; *The Ring and the Book*, 1868-69; *Balaustion's Adventure*, 1871; *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*, 1871; *Fifine at the Fair*, 1872; *The Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, 1873; *Aristophanes' Apology*, 1875; *The Inn Album*, 1875; *Pacchiarotto and How He Worked in Distemper, with Other Poems*, 1876;

*La Saisiaz*, 1878; *Dramatic Idyls*, 1879-80; *Jocoseria*, 1883; *Ferishtah's Fancies*, 1884; *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance*, 1887; *Asolando*, 1890.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"The first and perhaps the final impression we receive from the work of Robert Browning is that of a great nature, an immense personality. The poet in him is made up of many men. He is dramatist, humorist, lyrist, painter, musician, philosopher, and scholar, each in full measure, and he includes and dominates them all. In richness of nature, in scope and penetration of mind and vision, in energy of passion and emotion, he is probably second among English poets to Shakespeare alone. In art, in the power or the patience of working his native ore, he is surpassed by many; but few have ever held so rich a mine in fee. So large, indeed, appear to be his natural endowments, that we cannot feel as if the whole vast extent of his work has come near to exhausting them."—Arthur Symons, *An Introduction to the Study of Browning*, p. 1.

The characters in Browning's dramas "are impervious to outward influence, except in so far as it serves to discharge what is already within. Within the inner realm of passions, emotions, volitions, ambitions, and the world which these catch up in their career, there is no lack of movement. A plenitude of powers, all active, are revealed by him: they coöperate, sever, mingle, collide, combine, and are all astrain—but they are all psychical. Browning places us in the parliament of the mind. It is the powers of the mind to which we listen in high debate. . . . The tendency towards dwelling upon ideal issues rather than upon outer deeds, on the significance of facts for souls, and the insignificance of all things save in the soul's context, was always present in Browning; so, also, was the tendency towards monologue, with its deliberate, ordered persistency. And both of these tendencies grew. External circumstance became, more and more, the mere garb of the inner mood; deeds, more and more, the creatures of thoughts; and all real values were, more and more, undisguisedly ideal ministrants to man's need of beauty, or goodness, or love and happiness."—Sir Henry Jones, *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 13, pp. 67-68.

"Browning's chief influence, other than what is purely artistic, upon a reader is towards establishing a connection between the known order of things in which we live and move and that larger order of which it is a part. He plays upon the will, summoning it from lethargy to activity. He spiritualizes the passions by showing that they tend through what is human towards what is divine. He assigns to the intellect a sufficient field for exercise, but attaches more value to its efforts than its attainments. His faith in an unseen order of things creates a hope which persists through the apparent failures of earth. In a true sense he may be named the successor of Wordsworth, not indeed as an artist but as a teacher."—Edward Dowden, *The Life of Robert Browning*, p. 396.

"It will be well, too, while dealing with the question of Browning's alleged obscurity, to remind ourselves that often a piece of verse may obey all the laws of good poetry, and convey the peculiar pleasure that pertains to good poetry, yet not offer a definite, easily-stated proposition to the reasoning faculties. We must realize the value of the vague; the imagination must be sympathetic to the mood of Sir Thomas Browne when he declared he loved 'to lose himself in a mystery.' Many a poem of Browning—*Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came* may be named as a type—piques us with a poignant sense of delight, although, when we have ransacked all the handbooks, we still puzzle over the meaning. There is such a thing as poetry for poetry's sake, and if a poet like Browning, whose message in general is so clear and high, chooses to write poetry of this sort, it is the part of wisdom to receive it in the same spirit, and not make the philistine mistake of setting it down as an opaque failure. And in any consideration of faulty technique, it is necessary to bear in mind that, in a sense, Life is more than art: that a great personality, a great force in the world of thought, remains such whatever the æsthetic shortcomings. Whitman is one of the few significant persons yet produced in America, in spite of the fact that we may deplore his art creed, or lack of it. In like manner, while Robert Browning's position as a Victorian poet is likely to be affected eventually by the fact that his literary artistry is imperfect compared to his contemporary, Tennyson, the other fact that he is one of the most original, resourceful, and influential song-seers of the nineteenth century remains unshaken. Such indeed is his verbal magic at times, his might of music, his magnificently imaginative interpretation of humanity, the soar and fire of his message, that it seems as if all his peculiarities were but the necessary background to such a display of genius. He called himself in comparison with his wife 'only a painstaking fellow,' and such he was in uninspired moments; but at others he was so truly uplifted and elect to great utterance that we hold our breath and 'hush and bless ourselves with silence.'"—Richard Burton, Introduction to *Select Poems of Browning*, p. xxxviii.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### PARACELSUS (p. 166)

*Paracelsus*, named after the hero, is a poem of five scenes, each representing a critical moment in the life of a famous Swiss physician (1493-1541) who, in spite of his charlatanism, has been termed "the father of modern chemistry." In the poem, Paracelsus, at twenty, aspires to attain knowledge, which he regards as the highest good, and contrary to the advice of two friends—Festus and his wife Michal—he decides to gain his end through untried methods and in unfamiliar places; he will give up love and pleasures of life in order to succeed. After nine years of study Paracelsus admits defeat, and as he reflects upon his sad condition, he hears the poet Aprile reveal his passion for love and beauty and the life of art. But Aprile admits failure in life because he has not knowledge; Paracelsus realizes that his plans could not succeed because he lacked the quality of love. Five years later, outwardly successful as a teacher and a physician, Paracelsus confides to Festus that his life is a failure because he has contented himself with low aims; he has lost the human qualities of love, hope, fear, and faith. His students desert him, and he is denounced as a quack; but he still aspires—he will combine pleasure with knowledge; he will try all experiences of life, no matter how evil. Festus warns him in vain against this course of action; in the last scene Paracelsus lies dying in a hospital, conscious of all his mistakes, but he expresses his confidence in these words:

> "If I stoop
> Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
> It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
> Close to my breast; its splendor, soon or late,
> Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day.
> You understand me? I have said enough!"

In spite of its abstruseness of subject and manner, this poem is interesting and valuable in that it foreshadows much of Browning—his thought, his style, his high moral purpose, his lyrical power, and his ability to present critical moments of life poignantly in a form that anticipated his distinctive dramatic monologue.

### HEAP CASSIA, SANDAL-BUDS, AND STRIPES (p. 166)

This song is sung by Paracelsus to his friend Festus in Scene 4. Deserted and despised, Paracelsus sets out again in quest of knowledge, with all the enthusiasm of his youth—with the old aims, but not the same means. He speaks of the beauty of these aims; he calls them dreams and has them pass in song.

### OVER THE SEA OUR GALLEYS WENT (p. 166)

This song, a parable of "the men who proudly clung to their first fault, and withered in their pride," is also sung by Paracelsus in Scene 4. It explains his attitude toward "airy projects" that urged him to give over his wild courses of pleasure and hold to a "noble purpose."

### THUS THE MAYNE GLIDETH (p. 167)

This song, in Scene 5, is sung by Festus as he tries to comfort the dying and half-delirious Paracelsus. The song of the river they both knew so well restored the heart and mind of the listener as David's music restored the mind of Saul. (See *Saul*, p. 213.)

### PIPPA PASSES (p. 169)

Mrs. Orr reports (*Handbook*, p. 55) that "Mr. Browning was walking alone, in a wood near Dulwich, when the image flashed upon him of someone walking thus alone through life; one apparently too obscure to leave a trace of his or her passage, yet exercising a lasting though unconscious influence at every step of it; and the image shaped itself into the little silk-winder of Asolo, Felippa, or Pippa."

"The dramas of Browning," says Arlo Bates, "are inward. His temperament led him to select as the *motiv* of a play a theme so spiritual that its completeness could not be visible even to those of fairly acute perception in that swift first view which is all the stage allows. When he had worked out this theme, moreover, he took no trouble to complete the outward story. The result in representation was sure to be disconcerting and episodical. Striking examples of this are *Pippa Passes* and *In a Balcony*, where as far as outward events are concerned nothing is finished, and an audience must inevitably feel that it has seen only part of the play. Yet each is complete in the spiritually dramatic sense. The theme of the first, for instance, is the influence of Pippa upon other lives, unseen and unseeing; and this is fully shown. What happens as a consequence of the influence is not part of the spiritual theme. The drama, however, demands the completeness of the visible, whereas Browning was content with the working out of the spiritual."—Introduction to *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, p. xvi.

### RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI (p. 191)

Geoffrey de Rudel was a Provençal troubadour of the 12th century. Although he had never seen the Countess of Tripoli, he had heard of her great beauty, and in the true spirit of chivalric love of the Middle Ages he set out to visit her in her home in Northern Africa. When he arrived at Tripoli, he was deathly sick, and when the Countess went on board the ship to see him, he died in her arms. In the poem the Mount is the Lady, the Sun is Love, and the Flower is Rudel.

### IN A GONDOLA (p. 194)

When Browning heard of a picture by Daniel Maclise (1806–70) entitled *The Serenade*, he wrote the first stanza of this poem to stand as the description of the picture in an art catalog. Later, when he saw the picture, he thought it merited better treatment and wrote the rest of the poem.

### THE LABORATORY (p. 201)

The first water-color painting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti was an illustration of this poem and had as its title line 4—"Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?" Arthur Symons refers to the poem as "one of the very finest examples of Browning's unique power of compressing and concentrating intense emotion into a few pregnant words, each of which has its own visible gesture and audible intonation."—*An Introduction to the Study of Browning*, p. 86.

### "HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX" (p. 203)

Browning said that there was no historical foundation for this poem. "I wrote it," he states, "under the bulwark of a vessel, off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York,' then in my stable at home."

### THE LOST LEADER (p. 204)

The following letter was written by Browning in reply to a question whether this poem refers to

Wordsworth after he abandoned the liberal views of his youth:

19 Warwick-Crescent, W., Feb. 24, '75

DEAR MR. GROSART: I have been asked the question you now address me with, and as duly answered it, I can't remember how many times; there is no sort of objection to one more assurance or rather confession, on my part, that I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model; one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account; had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man, I should not have talked about "handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon." These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet, whose defection, nevertheless, accompanied as it was by a regular face-about of his special party, was to my juvenile apprehension, and even mature consideration, an event to deplore. But just as in the tapestry on my wall I can recognize figures which have *struck out* a fancy, on occasion, that though truly enough thus derived, yet would be preposterous as a copy, so, though I dare not deny the original of my little poem, I altogether refuse to have it considered as the "very effigies" of such a moral and intellectual superiority.

Faithfully yours,
ROBERT BROWNING.

### THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT SAINT PRAXED'S CHURCH (p. 212)

This poem has won high praise for the way in which it re-creates the temper of the Renaissance period. Ruskin says of the poem: "Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages; always vital, right, and profound; so that in the matter of art, with which we have been specially concerned, there is hardly a principle connected with the medieval temper that he has not struck upon in those seemingly careless and too rugged rhymes of his. . . . I know no other piece of modern English prose or poetry in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of the *Stones of Venice*, put into as many lines, Browning's being also the antecedent work. The worst of it is that this kind of concentrated writing needs so much *solution* before the reader can fairly get the good of it, that people's patience fails them, and they give the thing up as insoluble; though, truly, it ought to be to the current of common thought like Saladin's talisman, dipped in clear water, not soluble altogether, but making the element medicinal."—*Modern Painters*, Vol. IV, ch. 20, sec. 32, 34.

### SAUL (p. 213)

*Saul* is generally regarded as one of Browning's greatest achievements and as the noblest of his religious poems. Arthur Symons says of it: "It seems to unite almost the whole of his qualities as a poet in perfect fusion. Music, song, the beauty of nature, the joy of life, the glory and greatness of man, the might of Love, human and divine—all these are set to an orchestral accompaniment of continuous harmony, now hushed as the wind among the woods at evening, now strong and sonorous as the storm-wind battling with the mountain pine. *Saul* is a vision of life, of time and of eternity, told in song as sublime as the vision is steadfast."—*An Introduction to the Study of Browning*, p. 89.

The first nine stanzas of the poem were published in 1845; the rest were written in Rome in 1853-54, after his marriage. The advance in religious fervor noticeable in the second part has been said to be due to the influence of Mrs. Browning.

### A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL (p. 237)

Dr. Richard Burton says of this poem: "I know of no lyric of the poet's more representative of his peculiar and virile strength than this, in that it makes vibrant and thoroughly emotional an apparently unpromising theme. In relation to the Renaissance, to the age of the revival of learning, the moral is the higher inspiration derived from the new wine of the classics, so that what in later times has cooled down too often to a dry-as-dust study of the husks of knowledge, is shown to be, at the start, a veritable reveling in the delights of the fruit."—*Literary Likings*, p. 162.

Stopford Brooke says: "This is the artist at work, and I doubt whether all the laborious prose written, in history and criticism, on the revival of learning, will ever express better than this short poem the inexhaustible thirst of the Renaissance in its pursuit of knowledge, or the enthusiasm of the pupils of a New Scholar for his desperate strife to know in a short life the very center of the universe."—*The Poetry of Robert Browning*, p. 155.

### THE STATUE AND THE BUST (p. 239)

The characters and the places mentioned in this poem are historical. The statue is that of Ferdinand I (1549-1609), Grand Duke of Florence. It stands in the Piazza della Santa Annunziata, a famous square in Florence named after the church on one side of it. The statue looks toward the palace once owned by a noble family named Riccardi and now called the Palazzo Antinori. The bust, which existed only in fancy, was that of the wife of the head of the Riccardi family; it is represented as having been placed beneath the window of the palace which the statue faces.

The Duke's palace, situated in the Via Larga (line 34) was built by Cosimo dei Medici in 1430. In 1659 it was sold by the Medici family to Marchese Riccardi, and has since been known as the Palazzo Riccardi. It should not be confused with the original Riccardi palace, in which the lady was kept prisoner.

A correspondent of an American paper once asked the following questions regarding this poem:

1. When, how, and where did it happen? Browning's divine vagueness lets one gather only that the lady's husband was a Riccardi. 2. Who was the lady? who the duke? 3. The magnificent house wherein Florence lodges her préfet is known to all Florentine ball-goers as the Palazzo Riccardi. It was bought by the Riccardi from the Medici in 1659. From none of

its windows did the lady gaze at her more than royal lover. From what window, then, if from any? Are the statue and the bust still in their original positions?

The letter fell into the hands of Thomas J. Wise; he sent it to Browning, and received the following answer:

Jan. 8, 1887.

DEAR MR. WISE: I have seldom met with such a strange inability to understand what seems the plainest matter possible: "ball-goers" are probably not history-readers, but any guide-book would confirm what is sufficiently stated in the poem. I will append a note or two, however. 1. "This story the townsmen tell"; "when, how, and where," constitutes the subject of the poem. 2. The lady was the wife of Riccardi; and the duke, Ferdinand, just as the poem says. 3. As it was built by, and inhabited by, the Medici till sold, long after, to the Riccardi, it was not from the duke's palace, but a window in that of the Riccardi, that the lady gazed at her lover riding by. The statue is still in its place, looking at the window under which "now is the empty shrine." Can anything be clearer? My "vagueness" leaves what to be "gathered" when all these things are put down in black and white? Oh, "ball-goers"!

**Page 242, lines 214–250.** "Mr. Santayana in his most interesting book *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* . . . describes the poetry of Browning most truly as the poetry of barbarism, by which he means the poetry which utters the primeval and indivisible emotions. 'For the barbarian is the man who regards his passions as their own excuse for being, who does not domesticate them either by understanding their cause, or by conceiving their ideal goal.' Whether this be or be not a good definition of the barbarian, it is an excellent and perfect definition of the poet. It might, perhaps, be suggested that barbarians, as a matter of fact, are generally highly traditional and respectable persons who would not put a feather wrong in their head-gear, and who generally have very few feelings and think very little about those they have. It is when we have grown to a greater and more civilized stature that we begin to realize and put to ourselves intellectually the great feelings that sleep in the depths of us. Thus it is that the literature of our day has steadily advanced toward a passionate simplicity, and we become more primeval as the world grows older until Whitman writes huge and chaotic psalms to express the sensations of a schoolboy out fishing, and Maeterlinck embodies in symbolic dramas the feelings of a child in the dark."—Chesterton, *Robert Browning*, pp. 183-84.

### "CHILDE ROLAND TO THE DARK TOWER CAME" (p. 242)

This poem is based upon Edgar's mad song in *King Lear*, III, 4, 171-73.—

"Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
His word was still—Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man."

Mrs. Orr (*Handbook*, p. 274, note) ventures to state that the picturesque materials in the poem "included a tower which Mr. Browning once saw in the Carrara Mountains, a painting which caught his eye years later in Paris, and the figure of a horse in the tapestry in his own drawing-room—welded together in the remembrance of the line from *King Lear.*"

In an article describing a visit to Browning, J. W. Chadwick speaks of the tapestry and writes as follows:

"Upon the lengthwise wall of the room, above the Italian furniture, somber and richly carved, there was a long, wide band of tapestry, on which I thought I recognized the miserable horse of Childe Roland's pilgrimage:—

'One stiff blind horse, his every bone a-stare,
 Stood stupefied, however he came there:
  Thrust out past service from the devil's stud!'

I asked Mr. Browning if the beast of the tapestry was the beast of the poem; and he said yes, and descanted somewhat on his lean monstrosity. But only a Browning could have evolved the stanzas of the poem from the woven image. I further asked him if he had ever said that he only wrote *Childe Roland* for its realistic imagery, without any moral purpose—a notion to which Mrs. Sutherland Orr has given currency; and he protested that he never had. When I asked him if constancy to an ideal—'He that endureth to the end shall be saved'—was not a sufficient understanding of the central purpose of the poem, he said, 'Yes, just about that.' "—"An Eagle-Feather," *The Christian Register*, Jan. 19, 1888 (67:37).

Chesterton writes of the poem: "It is the hint of an entirely new and curious type of poetry, the poetry of the shabby and hungry aspect of the earth itself. Daring poets who wished to escape from conventional gardens and orchards had long been in the habit of celebrating the poetry of rugged and gloomy landscapes, but Browning is not content with this. He insists upon celebrating the poetry of mean landscapes. That sense of scrubbiness in nature, as of a man unshaved, had never been conveyed with this enthusiasm and primeval gusto before:

'If there pushed any ragged thistle-stalk
 Above its mates, the head was chopped; the bents
 Were jealous else. What made those holes and rents
In the dock's harsh swarth leaves, bruised as to balk
All hope of greenness? 'tis a brute must walk
 Pashing their life out, with a brute's intents.'

"This is a perfect realization of that eerie sentiment which comes upon us, not so often among mountains and waterfalls, as it does on some half-starved common at twilight, or in walking down some gray mean street. It is the song of the beauty of refuse; and Browning was the first to sing it. Oddly enough it has been one of the poems about which most of those pedantic and trivial questions have been asked, which are asked by those who treat Browning as a science instead of a poet. 'What does the poem of *Childe Roland* mean?' The only genuine answer to this is 'What does anything mean?' Does the earth mean nothing? Do gray skies and wastes covered with thistles mean nothing? Does an old horse turned out to graze mean nothing? If it does, there is but one further truth to be added—that everything means nothing."—*Robert Browning*, p. 159.

### IN A BALCONY (p. 245)

"The real core of the play is this development of the love of Constance. She allows herself to be loved; she delights in the pretty play of intrigue; she is proud of the devotion of this man who is shaping the destinies of the kingdom; she is even great enough to be ready to make to the Queen the highest sacrifice of which her nature as it then is can be capable: but she is not touched by the flame of that passion which makes the very soul of Norbert incandescent. The great *motiv* of *In a Balcony* is the awakening of the inmost consciousness of Constance to the greatness of the love of Norbert and her quick response to that call which this perception makes to her highest and most feminine nature. . . . To call the drama incomplete—'equivalent to the third or fourth act of what might prove a tragedy or a drama,' is Mrs. Sutherland Orr's way of putting it—or to consider of importance what comes after the closing words of Constance, is to ignore the fact that the aim is to picture the regeneration of the soul of Constance from intellectual love to supreme passion, her rise from intellectual self-sacrifice to that complete self-surrender which is the highest phase of human love; and to fail to consider how this aim is completely accomplished before the curtain falls."—Arlo Bates, Introduction, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon,* and Other Plays, pp. xxix, xxxi.

A contrasting view of this drama is given in the following quotation from Stopford Brooke:

"I do not believe that Browning meant to make self-sacrifice the root of Constance's doings. If he did he has made a terrible mess of the whole thing. He was much too clear-headed a moralist to link self-sacrifice to systematic lying. Self-sacrifice is not self-sacrifice at all when it sacrifices truth. It may wear the clothes of Love, but, in injuring righteousness, it injures the essence of love. It has a surface beauty, for it imitates love, but if mankind is allured by this beauty, mankind is injured. It is the false Florimel of self-sacrifice. Browning, who had studied self-sacrifice, did not exhibit it in Constance. There is something else at the root of her actions, and I believe it to be jealousy. The very first lie she urges her lover to tell (that is, to let the Queen imagine he loves her) is just the thing a jealous woman would invent to try her lover and the Queen, if she suspected the Queen of loving him, and him of being seduced from her by the worldly advantage of marrying the Queen."—Stopford Brooke, *The Poetry of Robert Browning,* pp. 341-342.

### FRA LIPPO LIPPI (p. 261)

"This picture of the harum-scarum monk painter of the fifteenth century, historical in its framework but with Browning's usual freedom of psychologic interpretation, is instinct with the pagan joy of life which is in dramatic contrast with the conventual medieval conception. Aside from its pictorial and human values—and these suffice to place it high among the monologues—it has much interest as an expression of the so-called realistic philosophy of art, put into the mouth of Lippo, one of the strongest of arguments for those who find the reproduction of God's world in art an all-sufficient object. The fellow monks who believed that deity was best served by bad drawing and untruth to human nature, stand for the pseudo-idealists."—Richard Burton, *Select Poems of Robert Browning,* p. 319.

### ANDREA DEL SARTO (p. 266)

This poem was written as an interpretation of a picture by Andrea del Sarto representing the painter and his wife, in the Pitti Palace, Florence. John Kenyon, a cousin of Mrs. Browning, had asked Browning to secure for him a copy of the picture; being unable to find a satisfactory copy, Browning sent him the poem instead.

The early paintings of Andrea del Sarto are regarded as his best work. A. C. Swinburne says of them: "These are the first fruits of his flowering manhood, when the bright and buoyant genius in him had free play and large delight in its handiwork; when the fresh interest of invention was still his, and the dramatic sense, the pleasure in the play of life, the power of motion and variety; before the old strength of sight and of flight had passed from weary wing and clouding eye, the old pride and energy of enjoyment had gone out of hand and heart.

"How the change fell upon him, and how it wrought, anyone may see who compares his later with his earlier work. . . . The time came when another than Salome [referring to Andrea del Sarto's picture of Salome dancing before Herod] was to dance before the eyes of the painter; and she required of him the head of no man, but his own soul; and he paid the forfeit into her hands. . . . In Mr. Browning's noblest poem—his noblest, it seems to me—the whole tragedy is distilled into the right words, the whole man raised up and reclothed with flesh. One point only is but lightly touched upon—missed it could not be by an eye so sharp and skillful—the effect upon his art of the poisonous solvent of love. How his life was corroded by it, and his soul burnt into dead ashes we are shown in full; but we are not shown in full what as a painter he was before, what as a painter he might have been without it."—"Notes on Designs of the Old Masters at Florence," *Complete Works,* Vol. 15, pp. 190-193.

### PROSPICE (p. 295)

This poem is a triumphant statement of Browning's faith in personal immortality. In 1876 he said in a letter to a friend: "Dante wrote what I will transcribe from my wife's Testament wherein I recorded it fourteen years ago, 'Thus I believe, thus I affirm, thus I am certain it is, that from this life I shall pass to another, there where that lady lives of whom my soul was enamored.'" (Griffin, *The Life of Robert Browning,* p. 297). To another correspondent he wrote: "Why, *amico mio,* you know as well as I that death is life, just as our daily, our momentarily, dying body is none the less alive and ever recruiting new forces of existence. Without death, which is our crapelike churchyardy word for change, for growth, there could be no prolongation of that which we call life. . . . Never say of me that I am dead."

THE RING AND THE BOOK (p. 298)

This is Browning's longest if not his greatest work, the triumph of the dramatic monologue. It consists of twelve books totaling over 20,000 lines, which present from different points of view the story of a famous murder that occurred in Italy in 1698.

As recorded in *The Old Yellow Book*, the source of Browning's poem, the story is as follows: Guido Franceschini (born 1658), a Florentine nobleman of depleted fortune, was married at Rome in 1693 to Pompilia (born July 17, 1680), brought up as the daughter and heir of Pietro and Violante Comparini, who were thought to possess considerable property. All three went to live with Guido in his home at Arezzo. Unable to endure the bitter feeling shortly aroused, the Comparini returned to Rome (Mar.-Apr., 1694) and gave out the report that Pompilia was not their child, Violante having purchased her as a baby from a disreputable mother. On this ground Pietro brought suit against Guido to recover the marriage dowry. The case, first decided in favor of Guido, was appealed and never settled, much to Guido's mortification.

Because of domestic unhappiness, partly due to Guido's jealousy aroused by the friendship between Pompilia and Giuseppe Caponsacchi (born 1673), a young Canon in the church, Pompilia fled with the Canon for Rome—on April 29, 1697. They arrived on the following evening at Castelnuovo, a hamlet about fifteen miles from Rome, and stayed all night at the inn, where they were overtaken by Guido next morning. On his complaint they were arrested and taken to prison. They were tried before the Tribunal of the Governor, and in September a decision was announced. Pompilia was sent to a convent, and Caponsacchi was suspended for three years and banished to Civita Vecchia, a seaport near Rome. Expecting the birth of a child, Pompilia was allowed to go to the house of the Comparini in Rome. Both Guido and Pompilia had entered suit for divorce, but before either case could be considered, Pompilia gave birth to a son, on December 18, 1697. On the night of January 2, 1698, Guido and four of his confederates gained entrance to the house, murdered the aged Comparini, and left Pompilia for dead; she lived four days. The murderers were caught, tried before the Court, and sentenced to be executed. Guido's appeal to the Pope for clemency was denied, and the execution took place on February 22, 1698.

Browning became interested in the story in 1860, when by chance he came upon a parchment-bound book in Florence containing a collection of documents—some printed and some written—bearing upon the case; he bought the volume for eightpence. This collection is now known as *The Old Yellow Book;* it was Browning's chief source of material, and furnished the "Book" part of the title of his poem. The other part of the title was derived from a ring worn by Mrs. Browning, and after her death by Browning himself on his watch-chain.

Book I, called *The Ring and the Book,* explains the title of the poem by pointing out the analogy between the process of manufacturing a ring and the process of transforming the collection of crude facts into a finished poem. As the jeweler adds an alloy to permit the desired workmanship on the ring, so Browning mixes his poetic fancy with the simple legal evidence contained in the *Yellow Book* to make possible an artistic whole. A summary of the story is given as Browning imagines it after his fancy has vitalized the characters into living personalities. In the end, however, as with the ring, the alloy must be removed, leaving only the refashioned product. To accomplish this result, the characters will appear in the poem and tell their own stories.

Book II, *Half Rome*, presents the view of persons who take Guido's side—that of a husband deceived and imposed upon from the beginning. The scene is in the church where the dead bodies of the Comparini lie exposed to the view of the curious multitude. The story, up to the point of the murder, is told by a partisan who suggests that as Violante had deceived her husband regarding the child, it was natural for her to deceive Guido since she desired a noble husband for the girl. After the foster-parents left Guido's home and announced that Pompilia was not their child, Guido took the view that all this was done to defraud him. Naturally he was resentful, especially when the Court gave such slight punishment to Pompilia and the priest. What Guido did, therefore, he did in defense of his honor.

Book III, *The Other Half Rome,* presents the view of the other half of the public, in favor of Pompilia, dying in the hospital from her wounds. The action of the Comparini is excused, and it is Guido who is charged with treachery and deceit and cruelty. It is pointed out that guilty persons would not flee, much less stop before they reached their destination. This half of the public denies the husband the right to act as judge and executioner of his own case.

Book IV, *Tertium Quid*, presents the opinion of a disinterested critic, the spokesman of the superior class, who cleverly tried to avoid offending the prejudices of his distinguished listeners. Both parties in the action are blamed, both excused. Which sinned more was hard to tell.

Book V, *Count Guido Franceschini*, gives Guido's defense. Tortured into confessing the murder, Guido seeks to justify his whole course of action. He tells the Court of his ancient and honored family, of its service to the state and to the church. In seeking a wife with a dowry he followed a laudable course, advised by loyal friends. He had dealt fairly, but had been cheated. Besides, Pompilia and her foster-parents had maligned his character and had made him the laughing-stock of the town. His resentment was natural when his wife was referred to as the bastard of a nameless strumpet, and when he found Caponsacchi loitering about her windows. Then one morning he found the servants drugged, his money stolen, and his wife gone with the priest. When he overtook the fugitives, he did not, as was his right, exact immediate vengeance by killing them, but called upon the law for help; and all he got was mild punishment for the offenders.

When he heard of the release of Pompilia, of the birth of her son, and of the theft of the child he had longed for, he could not endure the shame longer. With four loyal servants he went to Rome. They arrived on Christmas Eve, and for nine days he prayed against temptation to avenge the wrongs. He confessed the murder, but after it was committed he slept soundly; he had done God's bidding—what the Court should have done before—and as the law's defender he demands thanks and his freedom.

Book VI, *Guiseppe Caponsacchi*, gives the story of the priest, the facts that he had related at his own trial six months before. Then the Court laughed at him; now it listens soberly. He stresses the sanctity of his priestly vows and tells how he first saw Pompilia, the "sad, strange lady," at the theater; how letters were brought to him, purported to have been written by her, imploring sympathy and aid. Though conscious of the trick being played by Guido, the priest talked with Pompilia and learned that the letters were forgeries since she could neither read nor write; and together they planned the escape, and rode continuously until they reached Castelnuovo, near Rome. All night he kept guard over Pompilia, but early in the morning they were overtaken by Guido and his band, and later tried and punished. He reminds the Court of the forged letters and points out that if he and Pompilia were guilty they would not have taken flight as they did. He reasserts his innocence, and with all the sincerity and pathos of his nature begs the Court to be just.

Book VII, *Pompilia*, gives the life story of Pompilia as she told it on her death-bed in the presence of the nuns and of her confessor. Conscious of her impending death from Guido's twenty-two dagger wounds, she rejoices that she has been a mother if only for two weeks. She tells of her happy child-life with the Comparini, of the mysteriousness of her marriage with Guido, of the unfortunate deceit practiced upon him by Violante, and of his cruel treatment and false charges. When she was told that the priest had written her letters, she begged that he be entreated to write no more. Unable to endure the torture in Guido's home, she had appealed first to the Archbishop, then to the Governor of the city, and when aid was denied, she asked Caponsacchi to take her to her foster-parents at Rome. She tells of the flight, of being overtaken by Guido, and of the horrors of the fatal night of the murder. Though she could not love her husband, she forgives him. At the last she blesses Caponsacchi and commits her soul to God.

Book VIII, *Dominus Hyacinthus de Archangelis*, gives the plans of Guido's lawyer, who sees in the case a great opportunity for self-exploitation. He is in his study preparing for the defense. He plans to astonish the Pope with his eloquence, and to ridicule the Latin of his opponent, whose argument he endeavors to anticipate. He will object to the method used to force a confession from Guido on the ground that a nobleman is exempt from torture. If Guido had not confessed, it would have been easy to charge the murder to Caponsacchi. In his speech to the court he plans to quote authorities who say that a man's honor is inviolable, and he will insist that Guido acted within his rights. He also plans to speak for the four accomplices. His account is interspersed with remarks regarding family matters, especially his liking for rich foods.

Book IX, *Juris Doctor Johannes-Baptista Bottinius*, introduces Pompilia's lawyer as he prepares the case of the state against Guido and his confederates. He plans to make light of the charges against Pompilia and Caponsacchi and to admit the possibility of many of them being true. He will praise the priest for defending Pompilia after the Archbishop and the Governor had refused to aid her. He will adorn his speech with learned literary allusions and will take pains to criticize his opponent's method of living.

Book X, *The Pope*, presents the final judgment, made by the Pope, to whom the decision of the Court had been appealed. After a detailed study of the evidence in the case the Pope finds nothing good in Guido, and denounces him for his dastardly acts, especially since he had had every opportunity for right living and had not shown any signs of repentance for what he had done. Pompilia and Caponsacchi, both champions of truth, are found worthy of praise. In full consciousness of performing his duty to God he signs the order for the execution of Guido and his accomplices.

The Pope called Pompilia "perfect in whiteness . . . my flower, my rose, I gather for the breast of God." Of Caponsacchi he said—

> "And surely not so very much apart,
> Need I place thee, my warrior priest."

Book XI, *Guido*, presents the final plea by the condemned man in his prison cell awaiting execution. He protests his innocence and implores the aid of the Cardinal and the Abate who have come to be with him to the end. He denounces the Pope for his lack of mercy, and refuses to repent. He seeks to justify all his acts, and regrets that Pompilia lived long enough to tell her story; otherwise he would have been free. He makes a final frantic appeal for his life as he hears approaching the Brothers of Mercy, who have come to chant the Office of the Dying at his cell-door and to attend his death on the scaffold.

Book XII, *The Book and the Ring*, gives the report of the execution and comments of persons regarding it. The first is contained in a letter from a Venetian who had visited Rome and witnessed the public execution; he describes the events of the day and states that before his death Guido asked forgiveness of God. One letter is from Guido's lawyer to friends of the Court telling them of the fine quality of his client and stating that he does not care how soon the old Pope dies. The third letter is from Pompilia's lawyer who regrets that he had not been on the other side, since the case was so easy that he had had no opportunity to show his skill. He objects to public statements made by Pompilia's confessor and vows to even things up when he defends the nuns in their suit for Pompilia's property. A decision of the Pope, however, restores the character of Pompilia and dismisses the suit of the nuns. No record was found of Pompilia's son.

"*The Ring and the Book* is full of exquisite beauty, amazing felicity of expression, fluent rhythm and melody; full also of crudities, jolts, harshness, pedantry, wretched witticisms, and coarseness. Why these contrasts? Because it is a study of human testimony. The lawyers in this work speak no radiant or spiritual poetry; they talk like tiresome, conceited pedants because they were tiresome, conceited pedants; Pompilia's dying speech of adoring passion for Caponsacchi is sublime music, because she was a spiritual woman in a glow of exaltation. Guido speaks at first with calm, smiling irony, and later rages like a wild beast caught in a spring-trap; in both cases the verse fits his mood. If Pompilia's tribute to Caponsacchi had been expressed in language as dull and flat as the pleas of the lawyers, then we should be quite sure that Browning, whatever he was, was no poet. For it would indicate that he could not create the right diction for the right situation and character."—W. L. Phelps, *Browning, How to Know Him*, pp. 45-46.

### MUCKLE-MOUTH MEG (p. 355)

This poem is related to the folklore theme of the "loathly lady" who is frequently a bespelled mortal waiting for some courageous hero to kiss her and break the charm that keeps her ugly. See Morris's *The Lady of the Land*, p. 633. It was once the practice in England to allow criminals their freedom if they would marry disreputable women. See Feste's statement in *Twelfth Night*, I, 5, 20: "Many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage." The story told in this poem is to be found in Sir Thomas Dick Lauder's *Scottish Rivers*. It is based upon a feud that had existed for a long time between the Murrays and the Scotts. William Scott, son of the head of the family of Harden, was caught, with his followers, stealing cattle from Sir Gideon Murray, and was given the choice, as stated in the poem, of either marrying Sir Gideon's daughter, muckle-mouthed Meg, or hanging. He chose the daughter. Sir Walter Scott, who was always proud of his Border ancestry, was descended from this marriage.

## ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861), p. 357

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61) was from her girlhood devoted to literature. Without any regular education, she yet contrived to pick up from her brother's tutor a knowledge of Greek, Latin, and the modern languages; Homer and Pope were her earliest passions. Her father, who combined a despotic desire to rule unconditionally in his family with a pride in the achievements of his children, had Elizabeth's premature epic on the Battle of Marathon privately printed in 1819. Her exercises in verses became her chief amusement when, in 1821, she fell in saddling her pony, and suffered an injury to her spine; this injury and the later shock of her brother's death by drowning confined her for many years to a darkened room. A volume of poems in 1828 made her known to the world; in 1844 she published a volume which not only established her poetic reputation, but also moved Robert Browning, then rising to fame, to write her a letter of praise. A correspondence followed, and a meeting in 1845. Under the stimulus of Browning's companionship, Miss Barrett found new life. The record of the experience is in her *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1847). Her health so improved that marriage seemed possible; it met an obstacle in the fanatical opposition of her father; yet she showed a strength of purpose as great as his, married Browning secretly, and soon after left with him for France and Italy. During the next fifteen years, Mrs. Browning's home, except for occasional visits to France and England, was the villa of Casa Guidi at Florence, where her son was born in 1849, her books written, and artists and writers from England and America hospitably entertained. Among these guests was Hawthorne, who has left a description of Mrs. Browning's delicacy, her slender hands, black ringlets, and pale, eager face. Her impulsive sympathy made her an ardent champion of the Italian struggle for independence from Austria; a strain of mysticism in her nature made her a convert to spiritualism. Yet her life was largely centered in a passionate love for her home, her husband, and her boy. Her health, always precarious, at length failed in 1861.

Mrs. Browning's principal works were: *An Essay on Mind, with Other Poems*, 1826; *Prometheus Bound, and Miscellaneous Poems*, 1833; *The Seraphim, and Other Poems*, 1838; *Poems*, 1844; *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, 1847; *Casa Guidi Windows*, 1851; *Aurora Leigh*, 1857; *Poems before Congress*, 1860; *Last Poems*, 1862.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"Elizabeth Barrett had a strength really rare among women poets—the strength of phrase. She excelled in her sex, in epigram, almost as much as Voltaire in his. Pointed phrases like: 'Martyrs by the pang without the palm'—or 'Incense to sweeten a crime and myrrh to embitter a curse,' these expressions, which are witty after the old fashion of the conceit, came quite freshly and spontaneously to her quite modern mind. But the first fact is this, that these epigrams of hers were never so true as when they turned on one of the two or three pivots on which contemporary Europe was really turning. She is by far the most European of all the English poets of that age; all of them, even her own much greater husband, look local beside her. Tennyson and the rest are nowhere."—Gilbert Chesterton, *The Victorian Age in Literature*, pp. 177-78.

"In spite of all deduction that can be made—deductions, be it remembered, which are sometimes to be counted against the reader, and only sometimes against the poetess—she remains an attractive and delightful personage, and she has stamped enough of herself upon her poetry to give it an enduring charm. Her deep tenderness and genuineness of feeling, showing themselves in such poems as the *Cry of the Children* or *Cowper's Grave*, will never fail of their rightful power. She has touched all the chief human relationships, that of friend and friend, that of husband and wife, that of mother and child, with an exquisite insight and sensitiveness and delicacy, and her style, when she touches them, attains almost always that noble and severe simplicity which is so greatly to be preferred to her most luscious and copious versification."—W. T. Arnold, *The English Poets* (ed. by T. H. Ward), Vol. IV, p. 567.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE (p. 365)

This is a sonnet sequence (not a translation as the name implies) celebrating the love and courtship of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. The collection was first shown to Browning after the marriage. The incident is thus related by Edmund Gosse in *Critical Kit-Kats*, p. 2: "Their custom was, Mr. Browning said, to write alone, and not to show each other what they had written. This was a rule which he sometimes broke through, but she never. He had the habit of working in a downstairs room, where their meals were spread, while Mrs. Browning studied in a room on the floor above. One day, early in 1847, their breakfast being over, Mrs. Browning went upstairs, while her husband stood at the window watching the street till the table should be cleared. He was presently aware of someone behind him, although the servant was gone. It was Mrs. Browning, who held him by the shoulder to prevent his turning to look at her, and at the same time pushed a packet of papers into the pocket of his coat. She told him to read that, and to tear it up if he did not like it; and then she fled again to her own room."

The sonnets were meant to be private, but were published at the urgent suggestion of Browning, who once said, "I dared not reserve to myself the finest sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare." For some unexplained reason Mrs. Browning selected the title *Sonnets Translated from the Bosnian*, but Browning suggested *Sonnets from the Portuguese* because of his admiration of an earlier love poem by Mrs. Browning—*Catarina to Camoëns.* Camoëns (1524-80) was a famous Portuguese poet.

#### CASA GUIDI WINDOWS (p. 373)

The home of the Brownings overlooked a portion of the city of Florence that was the scene of many stirring events associated with the cause of Italian freedom, with which Mrs. Browning was in profound sympathy. She wrote the first part of *Casa Guidi Windows* during the heroic year of 1848, which marked a popular but vain uprising against Austria; the second part was completed in 1851. The poem deals especially with the earlier phases of the movement.

Although *Casa Guidi Windows* and Mrs. Browning's other political poems have, what Chesterton terms, "an impatient air, as if they were written, and even published, rather prematurely," he thinks that they are too little read today, since "they are amongst the most sincere documents of the history of the times."—*The Victorian Age in Literature*, p. 177.

## EMILY BRONTË (1818-48), p. 377

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Emily Brontë (1818-48) was born and brought up in a church parsonage at Haworth, among the bleak Yorkshire moors, which she loved with fervent and almost hysterical passion. She attended school for short unhappy intervals, first at Cowan's Bridge, immortalized as Lowood School by her sister Charlotte in *Jane Eyre;* later at Roe Head, where Charlotte also studied. In 1842 Emily went with Charlotte to Brussels to study, but returned before the end of the year. She had brief and bitter experiences as a governess before finally relapsing definitely into secluded home life at Haworth. She died in 1848 of the family scourge, tuberculosis. Her life was probably sadder and more aloof than that of any other English woman of letters.

Miss Brontë wrote under a pseudonym—Ellis Bell. Her poems were first published in 1846 with those of her sisters, who also used pseudonyms, in *Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell;* her only other book was *Wuthering Heights*, a novel, published in 1847.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"When we turn to Emily's poetry, the genius of it becomes instantly apparent. She was speaking her own natural language. Her verse is often obscured by its plainness and directness, its apparent indifference to all artistic charm. It is full of weak and conventional rhymes, careless assonances, vague and broken rhythms. Very few of her poems are accurately constructed. But there is an immense feeling of reality and observation. The power of the Brontës lay in their capacity for multiplying the significance of what would seem the small and trivial incidents and emotions; and Emily seems to have turned upon nature and life an unflinching vision, and to have really seen for herself the things which familiarity is apt to blur."—A. C. Benson, Introduction to *Brontë Poems*, pp. xi-xii.

Matthew Arnold, in *Haworth Churchyard*, speaks thus of Emily Brontë and her last poem, *No Coward Soul Is Mine* (p. 378):

> (How shall I sing her?) whose soul
> Knew no fellow for might,
> Passion, vehemence, grief,
> Daring, since Byron died,
> That world-famed son of fire—she, who sank
> Baffled, unknown, self-consumed;
> Whose too bold dying song
> Stirred, like a clarion-blast, my soul.

## SIR FRANCIS HASTINGS DOYLE
## (1810-88), p. 378

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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*Lectures Delivered before the University of Oxford, 1868* (Macmillan, London, 1869).
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*Monthly Review*, "Doyle's *Miscellaneous Verses*," Sept.-Dec., 1840 (153:69-74).
*National Review*, "Sir Francis Doyle's *Reminiscences*," Nov., 1886 (8:369-78).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Francis Hastings Charles Doyle (1810-88), the son of a noble family with military traditions, was educated at Eton and Oxford, where he was the special friend of Gladstone. After graduation he prepared himself for the practice of law. This profession, however, he soon abandoned for financial reasons, and entered government service, in which he gradually rose to the position of commissioner of customs. In 1867 he succeeded Matthew Arnold as professor of poetry at Oxford, an appointment which he held for ten years. He counted among his friends some of the most distinguished men of his time.

Doyle's principal publications were: *Miscellaneous Verses*, 1834; *The Return of the Guards and Other Poems*, 1866; *Lectures Delivered before the University of Oxford*, 1868; *Lectures on Poetry*, Second Series, 1877.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Sir Francis could write verse of various kinds which was never contemptible, but his strong point was the very difficult and dangerous kind of war poetry, in which, putting *The Charge of the Light Brigade* aside, he surpassed every other writer between Campbell and a living poet [Kipling]. Whenever he came near this great and too often mishandled subject, his genius seemed to catch fire; and, in two almost famous pieces—*The Red Thread of Honor* and *A Private of the Buffs*—in the first especially, that curious inspiriting and exciting quality which all songs of what Dante calls *salus* (war and patriotism) should have, and which they too often lack, is present in almost the highest degree."—George Saintsbury, *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. XIII, p. 186.

## SIR SAMUEL FERGUSON
## (1810-86), p. 380

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810-86) was educated in Belfast, his native city. After he was graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, he was called to the Irish bar, but in 1867 he retired from politics and became the first Deputy Keeper of the Records of Ireland. His first important poem, *The Forging of the Anchor*, was published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in his 21st year. A little later he published a series of tales which mingled prose with verse, and several political satires touching prominent Irish educational schemes. After his marriage in 1848 his home in Dublin became a center of generous and delightful hospitality for persons interested in literature, music, or art. The appearance of *Lays of the Western Gael* (1864) won him the degree of LL.D. from Dublin University. In addition to his many literary contributions, Ferguson made extensive researches in several parts of Ireland and published a number of essays on Irish antiquities. He was deeply interested in everything Irish, and in his effort to create modern poetry from old Irish stories and heroes he vitally influenced the literary history of his country.

Ferguson's principal publications were: *Lays of the Western Gael*, 1864; *Congal*, an epic poem, 1872; *Poems*, 1880.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The author of these poems is the greatest poet Ireland has produced, because the most central and most Celtic. Whatever the future may bring forth in the way of a truly great and national literature—and now that the race is so large, so widely spread, and so conscious of its unity, the years are ripe—will find its morning in these three volumes of one who was made by the purifying flame of national sentiment the one man of his time who wrote heroic poetry—one who, among the somewhat sybaritic singers of his day, was like some aged sea-king sitting among the inland wheat and poppies—the savour of the sea about him and its strength."—William Butler Yeats, 1886, quoted from Introduction to *Poems*, pp. xxxv-xxxvi, ed. by A. P. Graves.

## WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN (1813-65), p. 387

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Edmondstoune Aytoun (1813-65), the son of a Writer to the Signet, was early imbued with literary tastes by his mother, and developed especially a fondness for ballad poetry. After being educated at Edinburgh University, he entered his father's profession (1835), and soon was called to the regular Scottish bar (1840). Already Aytoun's literary interests had manifested themselves, and from 1849 on, he published a number of books in both poetry and prose. In 1844 he joined the staff of *Blackwood's Magazine;* in 1845 he was appointed professor of rhetoric and belles lettres at the University of Edinburgh, where he proved extraordinarily popular as a teacher. In 1852, when the Tories returned to power, Aytoun was rewarded with the sheriffship of Orkney. For several years thereafter his official, professorial, and literary careers ran equally parallel. *Firmillian*, 1854, was a brilliant satire, in imitation of the so-called "spasmodic school" of poetry; the racy *Bon Gaultier's Ballads* was the joint work of Aytoun and Theodore Martin. In addition to other literary work, he collected the ballads of Scotland, which he published in 1858. Aytoun's work, even in satire and parody, is dominated by a genial, kindly, and playful nature.

Aytoun's principal publications were: *The Book of Ballads*, edited by *Bon Gaultier*, 1845; *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers and Other Poems*, 1848; *Firmillian*, 1854; *Bothwell*, 1856; *Ballads of Scotland*, 1858.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The undeniable animation of his [Aytoun's] verse, and his frequent flashes of descriptive power, cause him to be credited with more imaginative fire than in reality he possesses. But none can deny its presence. . . . Undoubtedly he possessed, also, the enviable faculty, rare even among men of genius, of knowing where his real strength lay. Hence he avoided fruitless waste of energy, and did the best work of which he was capable. The chief quality of his poetry is its picturesqueness; it reproduces very vividly one aspect of the Scottish sentiment which belonged to a by-gone age."—Mackenzie Bell, in *The Poets and the Poetry of the Century* (ed. by Alfred H. Miles), Vol. 4, p. 395.

## WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-63), p. 389

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) was born in India, but was sent to England for his education. Indifferent to studies, he early amused his fellows with his skill in caricature and parody. After a year at Cambridge, he visited Germany and then went to Paris to study art, and having squandered a small inheritance, he began in 1837 to write miscellaneous reviews and stories for newspapers and magazines. His touch of university and studio life and his travels proved useful for his later novels, foreshadowed by his *Yellowplush Correspondence* (1837-1838) and the remarkable satiric narrative *Luck of Barry Lyndon* (1844). Under various nom-de-plumes—Théophile Wagstaff, Major Goliah Gahagan, Michael Angelo Titmarsh, George Savage, Fitz-Boodle, Mr. Snob, etc.—Thackeray wrote incessantly, largely to support his two daughters, upon whom his affections centered after his wife's insanity in 1840 removed her from the home. Numerous contributions to *Fraser's Magazine* and to *Punch* included ballads and other humorous poems. Much of his best verse, however, appeared in connection with his prose writings, in which it served as ornament or interlude. *Vanity Fair*, the famous "novel without a hero," appeared in 1848 and brought Thackeray renown; other novels followed—*Pendennis* (1850), *Henry Esmond* (1852), and *The Newcomes* (1855). Contemporary with his great productive period as a novelist came Thackeray's career as a lecturer. A series of lectures, *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, was successfully delivered in England in 1851 and in the United States in 1852 and 1853. Another series, *The Four Georges*, followed in 1855. His editorship of the *Cornhill Magazine* (1859-62) proved unsuccessful because of his dilatory habits and his compassion toward mediocrity. In 1862 he retired to a luxuriously appointed house intending to devote himself to what should be his greatest work, a history of the reign of Queen Anne, but before the work was begun, he died suddenly on the day before Christmas, 1863.

The fame of Thackeray rests primarily upon his novels, which reveal not only his historic faculty in re-creating the manners of a past age but also his faithful observation of contemporary society. His poems, which fill a volume of his collected works, possess qualities of humor, satire, and reflective seriousness that give him a high place among Victorian writers of light verse.

In personal appearance Thackeray was very striking, being six feet three inches in height, with a massive head and abundant hair that turned gray early. Carlyle referred to him as "a half-monstrous Cornish giant." In spite of his penchant for satire, his nature was essentially kindly; nothing gave him more pleasure than the gift of a sovereign to a schoolboy or a compliment to a lady.

The principal publications of Thackeray were: *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*, 1844; *Vanity Fair*, 1848; *Pendennis*, 1850; *Henry Esmond*, 1852; *The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century*, 1853; *The Newcomes*, 1855; *Miscellanies, Prose and Verse*, 1855-57; *Ballads*, 1856; *The Virginians*, 1859; *The Four Georges*, 1860.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"He [Thackeray] possessed the wit and fancy, the humor and tenderness, the refinement, without all of which qualities 'the real thing' cannot be produced. Nor was the lyrical strain absent from his composition. His verse is easy and possesses the essential merit of apparent spontaneity. He was almost invariably humorous; yet

there is something more than mere fun. Frequently he was satirical, occasionally he was indignant; sometimes . . . he was didactic; usually he was tender and pathetic. He could be gay; he could sprinkle his verses with playful or ironic humor; and upon all his best work his personality is impressed; the man's great heart is there for all to see who care to look. Most of his ballads are good; all are readable, and many are possessed of distinction. As has been said, his rhymes were often appalling, and his meter not always perfect; but his language was as simple and direct as in his prose writing. If he was not underrating his talent when he spoke of it as small beer, he certainly was not guilty of an error of judgment when he declared it was the right tap."—
—L. Benjamin, *Some Aspects of Thackeray*, p. 68.

## AUBREY THOMAS DE VERE
## (1814-1902), p. 392

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Poetical Works* (Paul, London, 1884-89).
*Poetical Works*, 7 vols. (Macmillan, London, 1898).
*Poems; a Selection*, ed. by J. Dennis (Cassell, London, 1890).
*Selections from the Poems*, ed., with a preface, by G. E. Woodberry (Macmillan, New York, 1894).
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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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*Catholic World*, "Swinburne and De Vere," Dec., 1874 (20:346-59).
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*Dublin Review*, "Recent Irish Poetry," Apr., 1865 (56:323-28). Same article in *Catholic World*, July, 1865 (1:478-81).
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Woodberry, G. E.: "Aubrey de Vere, Poet and Critic," *Studies of a Littérateur* (Harcourt, New York, 1921). Reprinted from *Makers of Literature* (Macmillan, New York, 1900).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Aubrey Thomas de Vere (1814-1902), the son of an Irish baronet and poet of the same name, was born at Curragh Chase, in County Limerick, Ireland, and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Upon visits in England, he became the fast friend of Tennyson, Henry Taylor, and other English men of letters. His early interest in poetry was dominated first by Byron, then by Wordsworth; but *The Search after Proserpine*, published in 1843, shows influence of Shelley and the Greeks. De Vere was interested in Irish political and economic problems of his time, and after witnessing the horrors of the Irish famine of 1846, inclined toward Catholicism; he was finally received into the Catholic church in 1851. From that time on, as he tells us, his poems were almost exclusively "intended to illustrate religious philosophy or early Irish history." For a few years he taught under Cardinal Newman in the new Catholic University at Dublin, but resigned in 1858 and sought permanent retirement at Curragh Chase.

The principal publications of De Vere were: *The Waldenses*, 1842; *The Search after Proserpine*, 1843; *May Carols*, 1857; *The Sisters, Inisfail, and Other Poems*, 1861; *The Legends of St. Patrick*, 1872; *Poetical Works*, 1884; *Critical Essays*, 3 vols., 1887-89.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The qualities of Aubrey de Vere's poetry are not far to seek. Lyrical in verse, strong in style, mainly historical in theme, heroic or spiritual in substance, above all placid, it stirs and tranquillizes the soul in the presence of lovely scenes, high actions, and those 'great ideas that man was born to learn'; and its outlook is upon the field of the soul regenerate, where suffering is remembered only through its purification, blessed in issues of sweetness, dignity, and peace. It takes wide range, but is predominantly either Bardic or Christian. The sympathy of the poet with the ancient Irish spirit must have been fed with patriotic fervor, akin to renewed inspiration, to permit him to render the old lays of his country with such fidelity to their native genius."—G. E. Woodberry, *Studies of a Littérateur*, p. 159.

## WILLIAM BARNES (1801-86), p. 393

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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*Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect; a Selection* (Paul, London, 1909).
*Twenty Poems in Common English*, ed., with an introduction, by John Drinkwater (Duffield, New York, 1925).
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*Macmillan's Magazine*, "William Barnes, the Dorsetshire Poet," May-Oct., 1862 (6:154-63).
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Patmore, C.. "An English Classic, William Barnes," *Fortnightly Review*, Nov., 1886 (46: 659-70).
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Woodberry, G. E.: "William Barnes, the Dorsetshire Poet," *Literary Memoirs of the Nineteenth Century* (Harcourt, New York, 1921).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Barnes (1801-86) was born and lived practically the whole of his life in Dorsetshire, the southern county of England, in which his ancestors had for centuries been farmers. Far from seeking to free himself from his local environment, he cultivated it and interpreted it to the world. In spite of poverty, he made the most of Dorsetshire schools and of opportunities for self-education, gained after ten years of work *in absentia* a degree from Cambridge, and became a scholar with a wide reputation especially in mathematics, archæology, and philology. In the intervals of his employment as teacher and country parson, he wrote verse, pried into the Celtic and Roman ruins about Dorchester, and wrote on the Dorset dialect and on the relations between English and other Teutonic tongues; his most remarkable crotchet was his defense of "purity" in English against the use of Latin derivatives and his employment of such terms as "wheelsaddle" and "sunprint" in place of "bicycle" and "photograph." Well-read in many literatures, admiring Petrarch and the Persian poet Saadi above all other writers, he yet confined the materials of his poetry to the limits of Dorchester. His first descriptions of his neighbors appeared in 1833 in local newspapers; his *Poems in the Dorset Dialect*, published in 1844, was followed by three other groups of "hand-writs," the last "in common English." The praise of Patmore, Tennyson, and Allingham did nothing to alter his essential homliness and serenity; as much a part of the Dorset countryside as the thatched houses, he worked vigorously in school and parish and study until well over eighty. Hardy, his successor as the laureate poet of Dorsetshire, has described him as an old man, plodding into Dorchester on a market-day "attired in a caped cloak, knee-breeches, and buckled shoes, with a leather satchel slung over his shoulders, and a stout staff in his hand," keeping the middle of the road, and pausing before the town-clock to set his ancient watch to London time.

Barnes's principal publications were: *Poems of Rural Life, in the Dorset Dialect*, 1844; *A Philological Grammar*, 1854; *Hwomely Rhymes*, 1858; *Notes on Ancient Britain and the Britons*, 1858; *Tiw: a View of the Roots and Stems of the English as a Teutonic Tongue*, 1862; *A Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect*, 1863; *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect: Third Collection*, 1863; *Poems of Rural Life in Common English*, 1868; *An Outline of English Speechcraft*, 1878; *An Outline of Redecraft or Logic*, 1878.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Readers will observe that Barnes is no untutored minstrel, that he is, indeed, a highly skilled technician, weaving all sorts of structural fancies into his verse... Barnes had a lyric heart, but he was a grave gentleman, a scholar, and in the most agreeable sense a precisian, and he delighted to exercise his singing gift in the terms of a very agile and conscious art. It will be noted, too, that this poet, who as a parish priest had more than an amateur knowledge of the seamy side of life, chose to be unashamedly on the side of the angels in his poetry."—John Drinkwater, Introduction to Barnes's *Twenty Poems in Modern English*, p. 9.

## CHARLES KINGSLEY (1819-75), p. 396

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Life and Works*, 19 vols. (Macmillan, London, 1901-03).
*Poems*, with an introduction by M. Kingsley (Taylor, New York, 1899).
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Waugh, A.: "Charles Kingsley," *Reticence in Literature* (Wilson, London, 1915).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The life of Charles Kingsley (1819-75) is well described by his own phrase "muscular Christianity." The son of a clergyman, he was at first attracted more by physical sports than by the church. At Clovelly, on the western coast of Devon, he learned to swim and row, and acquired an almost scientific knowledge of coastal plants and rocks; at the University of Cambridge, which he entered in 1838, he boxed, rowed on his college crew, and tramped on long geological and botanical excursions. His generous if somewhat excitable sympathies becoming concerned with the hardships of the poor, he was prompted, after his graduation, to enter the church as a means to alleviating social distress; he took parishes where there was the most work to do in the least congenial surroundings. With the same end, he espoused the cause of "Christian Socialism," which aimed to combine the teachings of Christ with the teachings of socialism in their application to life; he delivered lectures and wrote pamphlets designed to promote a better understanding between landlords and tenants, employers and laborers; and in 1848-51 published his novels *Yeast* and *Alton Locke*, which further promulgated his views. Another novel, *Hypatia*, in 1853, reflected his interest not only in the intellectual crises of his time, but also in historical studies; his *Westward Ho!*, written in 1855, during a vacation near his boyhood home in Clovelly, combined a romantic love of the past with a delight in vigorous adventure. The life of animals and plants about the seashore gave him his material for *Glaucus* in 1855 and *The Water Babies* in 1863. His poems, which he began writing early in his boyhood and published in 1858-75, embodied all his varied and energetic interests. Advancing years brought no abatement in his zest for living, even though ill-health and a constitutional restlessness kept him from working long in any one direction. From 1860 to 1863 he delivered lectures on history at Cambridge, more remarkable for their interest than their accuracy. In later life he held important positions in the church. He became involved, in 1864, in an unfortunate religious controversy with Cardinal Newman, and was signally defeated. For the sake of his health, he traveled in 1874 through the western states of America; returning to England, he sank rapidly, and died in 1875 at the country parish of which he had long been rector. Villagers and local huntsmen mingled with great soldiers and statesmen at his funeral.

Kingsley's principal publications were: *Alton Locke*, 1850; *Yeast*, 1851; *Hypatia*, 1853; *Alexandria and Her Schools*, 1854; *Sermons for the Times*, 1855; *Westward Ho!*, 1855; *Glaucus, or the Wonders of the Shore*, 1855; *The Heroes, or Greek Fairy Tales*, 1856; *Two Years Ago*, 1857; *Andromeda, and Other Poems*, 1858; *The Water Babies*, 1863; *Hereward the Wake*, 1866; *Madam How and Lady Why?* 1869; *At Last*, 1869; *Prose Idylls*, 1873; *Plays and Puritans*, 1873; *Health and Education*, 1874; *Lectures Delivered in America*, 1875.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Kingsley's true poetic faculty is best expressed in various sounding lyrics for which he was popularly and justly esteemed. These are new, brimful of music, and national to the core. *The Sands of Dee*, *The Three Fishers*, and *The Last Buccaneer* are very beautiful; not studies, but a true expression of the strong and tender English heart."—E. C. Stedman, *Victorian Poets*, p. 251.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### THE SANDS OF DEE (p. 397)

**Page 397, lines 20-21.** In discussing the pathetic fallacy, Ruskin cites lines 20 and 21 of this poem as an example of "fallacy caused by an excited state of the feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational." He says: "The foam is not cruel, neither does it crawl. The state of mind which attributes to it these characters of a living creature is one in which the reason is unhinged by grief. All violent feelings have the same effect. They produce in us a falseness in all our impressions of external things, which I would generally characterize as 'the pathetic fallacy.'"—*Modern Painters*, Vol. III, pt. 4, ch. 12, sec. 5.

## ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH
## (1819-61), p. 400

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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*Poems and Prose Remains*, with a selection from his letters and a memoir, ed. by his wife, 2 vols. (Macmillan, London, 1869).

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### CRITICISM

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Winchester, C. T.: "Arthur Hugh Clough," *An Old Castle and Other Essays*, (Macmillan, New York, 1922).

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-61), born in Liverpool of Welsh and Yorkshire stock, was a natural student from childhood, the early days of which he spent in Charleston, South Carolina, where he read Pope's *Homer* and many of Scott's novels; at the age of seven he is said to have mastered the lives of Columbus and Cortez. Returned to England he attended Rugby (1829-37) where he became the "ideal pupil" of Dr. Thomas Arnold. He entered Oxford during the stormy days of the Oxford Movement and soon came under the influence of Newman. A fellowship in Oriel College, accepted after his graduation, was resigned in 1848 because of his inability to subscribe any longer to the tenets of the Church of England, and, as his friend Matthew Arnold wrote, "Thyrsis of his own will went away." Brief travels in France and Italy brought no respite to his troubled spirit. Meantime he had been appointed Head of University Hall, London; had published with his friend Burbridge, a small volume of verses entitled *Ambarvalia*, and *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* (1848), a "long-vacation pastoral," which like his *Amours de Voyage* (1849) was written in English hexameters, a form of meter that provoked much discussion. Wearying of the restriction of thought imposed by his new position in London, Clough in 1852 accepted a proposal of Emerson to visit America, and crossed the Atlantic with Lowell and Thackeray for traveling companions. Despite the welcome accorded him in Boston and Cambridge, where he won the friendship of Emerson, Lowell, Charles Eliot Norton, and Longfellow, his efforts to support himself at tutoring and writing proved a failure, and he returned a year later to become an examiner in the Education Office, London. Married in 1854 to a cousin of Florence Nightingale, the famous English war-nurse, he thereafter took a lively interest in Miss Nightingale's work during and after the Crimean War. His health, never at any time very strong, took him to Florence, where he died in 1861. Clough is immortalized in Arnold's *The Scholar-Gypsy* (p. 471) and *Thyrsis* (p. 477), based upon a friendship formed at Rugby and Oxford.

The principal publications of Clough were: *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, 1848; *Ambarvalia* (poems), 1849; *Amours de Voyage*, 1862; *Dipsychus*, 1862; *Songs in Absence*, 1862; *Mari Magno*, 1862.

## INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"He [Clough] was not a great poet, because uppermost in him was the spirit of criticism. He suppressed his evident talent of observation that he might discuss in meter the vexed questions of the moment. And though he was ever intent to criticize life, he was no stern critic of his own poetry. Even though he kept some of his own poems long enough to satisfy Horace, he spared the use of the file. . . . The need of expression was too active in him. His thoughts clamored so loudly for utterance that he could not control them, and instead of a great poet, he became, so to say, the mouthpiece of his own doubting age. In other words, he was so faithful to the 'movements' of his time that he appears already somewhat antiquated and out of fashion. But if his shorter poems are not written with the exact care which art demands, they set forth with a loyal accuracy the experiences of his mind and soul. . . . Clough was in trouble always concerning his waning faith. . . . He hankered after the solution of the problems of life, and was driven back upon doubt. It was this frame of mind, which many have borne with equanimity, that Clough attempted to express in verse. 'Eat, drink, and die,' he wrote in his *Easter Day*, which most clearly reflects the sad candor of his skepticism. And even though, when he wrote these lines, in 1849, he had exchanged the human atmosphere of Oxford for the dismal solitude of University Hall, he could still take comfort in the security of Truth. So he turned back, with a kind of comfort, to a poetic exposition of his skepticism."—C. Whibley, Introduction to *Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough*, pp. xxii-xxiii.

"His poetry is the poetry of moods—moods of comparative hopefulness, moods of weariness and despair, moods of mere inquiry and deliberative reserve. To the superficial reader, . . . there might even seem to be the strangest inconsistencies in the utterances of some of his shorter poems; for his sensitive nature catches up and repeats, though always in tempered tones, now the sad wail of some who mourn over the rapid dissolution of the world's great heritage of belief, and now again the glad shout of others who, boldly and trustfully, press forward to meet the coming day. But the wail and the shout—the song of sorrow and the song of promise—alike belong to the man himself, and, far from being discordant or incompatible, are in their own ways equally expressive of his relation to the great issues of the time."—W. H. Hudson, *Studies in Interpretation*, p. 117.

See Arnold's *The Scholar-Gypsy* (p. 471) and *Thyrsis* (p. 477).

## CRITICAL NOTES

### DIPSYCHUS (p. 406)

This poem is generally ranked as Clough's most ambitious work. Miss Shackford says of it: "Dipsychus . . . is the most satiric of all of Clough's poems. It is the reverse side of his own life, the negative aspect of his positive action. It presents in loosely dramatic scenes the spiritual irresolution of the typical young Oxford man who, visiting Venice and delighting in all the shimmering beauty of the city, fascinated by the gay life, is, however, continually debating whether the appeal of the easy and conventional is the appeal of materialism or of good, honest common sense. The higher and the lower natures are in constant interplay, the remonstrant voice of the aspiring, mystical mood of Dipsychus is answered by the satiric spirit of conformity, the spirit of *laissez-faire* in the world of moral duty, until Dipsychus gives himself over to the care of the Mephisto within himself."—*Sewanee Review*, Oct., 1919, pp. 405-06.

The scene of Part I is Venice, that of Part II, London. The poem, left unfinished, was not published during Clough's lifetime.

## EDWARD FITZGERALD (1809-83), p. 416

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edward FitzGerald (1809-83), born Edward Purcell, came into the name by which he is known when upon the death of his maternal grandfather in 1818 the family assumed the name FitzGerald. After graduation from Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became intimate with Thackeray, and a brief visit to Paris, where he had lived a short time as a boy, FitzGerald settled down to the easy pleasant life of a country gentleman and something of a recluse, devoted to flowers, the ocean, literature, and the friendship of men like Carlyle and Tennyson. His placid seclusion was diversified only by various changes of residence and a very brief, unsatisfactory marriage. Many free adaptations from the Persian, Spanish, and Greek are the record of FitzGerald's more than dilettante fondness for exotic literature, and his delicacy in re-dressing it for English readers. Most of his work appeared anonymously.

FitzGerald's principal publications were: *Euphranor*, 1851; *Polonius*, 1852; *Six Dramas of Caldernon* (freely translated), 1853; *Salaman and Absal*, 1856; *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, 1859; *The Mighty Magician and Such Stuff as Dreams Are Made of* (freely translated from the Spanish), 1865; *The Downfall and Death of King Œdipus*, 1880.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"As a translator he [FitzGerald] stands almost alone, his peculiar virtue, noticeable alike in his versions from the Spanish and Greek, being so capitally and once for all illustrated in that of *Omar Khayyám* that in narrow space it is not necessary to go beyond this. From the purist and pedantic point of view FitzGerald, no doubt, is wildly unfaithful. He scarcely ever renders word for word, and will insert, omit, alter, with perfect freedom; yet the total effect is reproduced as perhaps no other translator has ever reproduced it. Whether his version of the *Rubáiyát*, with its sensuous fatalism, its ridicule of asceticism and renunciation, and its bewildering kaleidoscope of mysticism that becomes materialist, and materialism that becomes mystical, has not indirectly had influences, practical and literary, the results of which would have been more abhorrent to FitzGerald than to almost anyone else, may be suggested. But the beauty of the poem as a poem is unmistakable and altogether astounding. The melancholy richness of the rolling quatrain with its unicorn rhymes, the quaint mixture of farce and solemnity, passion and playfulness, the abundance of the imagery, the power of the thought, the seduction of the rhetoric, make the poem actually, though not original or English, one of the greatest of English poems."—G. Saintsbury, *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature*, p. 209.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM (p. 416)

FitzGerald became interested in Persian poetry as early as 1854; he read Omar in 1857, and was at once fascinated by the form and thought of his verse. The result was an English poem of 75 quatrains founded upon Omar and arranged to produce a continuous train of thought. Published as a pamphlet in 1859, the poem attracted no attention until it was accidentally discovered in 1860 in a London book-stall by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Upon his suggestion FitzGerald published in 1868 a completely revised edition, which consisted of 110 stanzas; later editions of 1872 and 1879 rearranged the stanzas and reduced the number to 101.

Most of the changes made in the second and third editions of the poem were obvious improvements, but it is generally thought that the first stanza was best in its original form:

> Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night
> Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight;
>   And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
> The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.

FitzGerald thus describes Omar's verses and his own: "The original Rubáiyát are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody; sometimes all rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank, sometimes as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange succession of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the 'Drink and make-merry,' which (genuine or not) occurs over frequently in the Original. Either way, the Result is sad enough: saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry: more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tent-maker, who, after vainly endeavoring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of *Tomorrow*, fell back upon *Today* (which has outlasted so many Tomorrows!) as the only Ground he got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet."

In the text, FitzGerald's capital letters have been preserved.

## MATTHEW ARNOLD
## (1822-88), p. 422

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Matthew Arnold (1822-88), austere poet and brilliant essayist and critic, was the eldest son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, famous headmaster of Rugby, from whom he inherited his high sense of duty and rigid intellectual honesty. Arnold continued the family tradition by attending Rugby and Oxford and then being elected Fellow of Oriel College. At Oxford he formed a friendship with Arthur Hugh Clough and came under the spell of the personal charm of Newman, though not of his intellectual and spiritual influence. Arnold soon abandoned his fellowship and from 1847 to 1851 was secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who then appointed him to an inspectorship of schools, a position Arnold retained until within two years of his death. Always fond of children and genuinely interested in the welfare of teachers, Arnold made a rich contribution to England through his arduous labors in the field of education, particularly by his reports and studies on foreign school systems, which he investigated, as foreign assistant commissioner on education, in France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and Piedmont.

Arnold had already published two volumes of poetry—*The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems* (1849) and *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems* (1852)—the fruits of Greek inspiration both in matter and in style. Two other volumes of verse (1853, 1855) were followed in 1858 by Arnold's appointment as professor of poetry at Oxford. Save for the volume of *New Poems*, which appeared in 1867, the rest of Arnold's published work consisted of prose essays, some delivered as lectures at Oxford, on literature, criticism, education, religion, etc. His important editorial work included *Six Chief Lives* from Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* in 1878; *Poems of Wordsworth* in 1879, and *Poetry of Byron* in 1881. A lecturing tour in America in 1883 yielded *Discourses in America*, the book of all his writings, Arnold told a friend, by which he "most desired to be remembered." He died suddenly in Liverpool in 1888, after a strenuous life which involved some uncongenial tasks and domestic trials, yet notably happy because of his serene temper and an unflagging interest in life about him.

In his lectures and prose writings Arnold, like Carlyle and Ruskin, was an apostle of the higher life. Permeated with classical culture, he sought to impress upon his generation ideals which should save society from "Philistinism," defined as narrow-mindedness, self-complacency, and vulgarity. His creed called for a vigorous "pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know . . . the best that has been thought and said in the world." He found the most stimulation among the Greeks, and he possessed the rare ability of assimilating the Greek spirit—its simplicity, its lucidity, its chasteness. He was deeply influenced by the Bible, by St. Augustine, by Shakespeare and Wordsworth and Byron; but more significantly by Goethe, whom he read and absorbed as he did the Greek classics in his youth. Sweeping aside the old personal school of literary criticism, Arnold announced "disinterestedness" as the first requisite of a critic, and set up "high seriousness" as a touchstone of great literature. With this ethical rather than æsthetic standard of judgment, he looked upon poetry as "a criticism of life," and regarded himself as an exponent of the classical temper in poetry as opposed to the excesses of romanticism, which then seemed to him to be dominant in England.

Arnold's principal publications were: *The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems*, 1849; *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*, 1852; *Poems*, 1853; *Poems, Second Series*, 1855; *Merope*, a tragedy, 1858; *On Translating Homer*, 1861; *Essays in Criticism*, 1865-81; *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, 1867; *New Poems*, 1867; *Schools and Universities on the Continent*, 1868; *Culture and Anarchy*, 1869; *St. Paul and Protestantism*, 1870; *Literature and Dogma*, 1873 ff.; *Mixed Essays*, 1879; *Irish Essays and Others*, 1882; *Discourses in America*, 1885.

## INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"There is no Victorian poet, perhaps there is no Victorian thinker, more significant in position than Matthew Arnold. Agnosticism of thought and feeling, with all its vagueness, finds in him an exquisitely accurate exponent. No other poet has been so clear in his understanding of confusion, so positive in an unstable equilibrium. In the union of definiteness of technique with vagueness of theme the charm of his work resides. Unsatisfied desire, evasive regret, indecision, doubt, all that has not yet translated itself from the dim twilight of the feeling to the daylight world of the deed—this Arnold gives us with delicate precision of touch. His poems are like gray shadows cast along some temple-floor, shadowy alike in clean purity of outline, and in dim uncertainty of content."—Vida D. Scudder, *The Life of the Spirit in the Modern English Poets*, p. 247.

"No poet in the roll of our literature, unless it be Milton, has been so essentially saturated to the very bone with the classical genius [as has Arnold]. His poetry, however, is 'classicial' only in a general sense, not that all of it is imitative of ancient models, or has any affectation of archaism. It is essentially modern in thought, and has all that fetishistic worship of natural objects which is the true note of our Wordsworthian school. But Arnold is 'classical' in the serene self-command, the harmony of tone, the measured fitness, the sweet reasonableness of his verse. This balance, this lucidity, this Virgilian dignity and grace, may be said to be unfailing. Whatever be its shortcomings and its limitations, Arnold's poetry maintains this unerring urbanity of form. There is no thunder, no rant, no discord, no honey, no intoxication of mysticism or crash of battle in him. Our poet's eye doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; but it is never caught 'in a fine frenzy rolling.' It is in this sense that Arnold is classical, that he has, and has uniformly and by instinct, some touch of that 'liquid clearness of an Ionian sky' which he felt in Homer. Not but what he is, in thought and by suggestion, one of the most truly modern, the most frankly contemporary, of all our poets."—F. Harrison, *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill and Other Literary Estimates*, p. 106.

"He is not great as a poet of the personal life, in spite of the charm of some of the poems of *Faded Leaves* and *Switzerland*. Nor is he great as a poet of ideas, in spite of the satisfaction that many who look sadly or impatiently on life take in thinking his thoughts. And if we compare him with Tennyson or Browning, we recognize at once that he has not the breadth and the sense of beauty of one, nor the depth and the sense of life of the other. We cannot measure him with either on their own ground any more than we can measure either of them with the other. Nor can we compare him with Swinburne because he wrote *The New Sirens*, nor with Mrs. Browning because he wrote *A Modern Sappho*. No! Matthew Arnold's greatness as a poet is not seen from such standpoints. He is a great poet because he is the author of *Dover Beach* and *Bacchanalia*, of *The Scholar-Gypsy* and *Rugby Chapel*, of *The Forsaken Merman* and *Sohrab and Rustum*. The author of these poems stands alone among English poets, because there is no one who so feels and so expresses the question as to the meaning of life, the recreating charm of nature, and the power of classic beauty."—E. E. Hale, Introduction to *Select Poems of Matthew Arnold*, p. xlix.

## CRITICAL NOTES

### SOHRAB AND RUSTUM, p. 459

Arnold quotes in a note the following story of Sohrab and Rustum as told in Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia* (2 vols., Murray, London, 1825):

"The young Sohrab was the fruit of one of Rustum's early amours. He had left his mother, and sought fame under the banners of Afrasiab, whose armies he commanded, and soon obtained a renown beyond that of all contemporary heroes but his father. He had carried death and dismay into the ranks of the Persians, and had terrified the boldest warriors of that country, before Rustum encountered him, which at last that hero resolved to do, under a feigned name They met three times. The first time they parted by mutual consent, though Sohrab had the advantage; the second, the youth obtained a victory, but granted life to his unknown father; the third was fatal to Sohrab, who, when writhing in the pangs of death, warned his conqueror to shun the vengeance that is inspired by parental woes, and bade him dread the rage of the mighty Rustum, who must soon learn that he had slain his son Sohrab. These words, we are told, were as death to the aged hero; and when he recovered from a trance, he called in despair for proofs of what Sohrab had said. The afflicted and dying youth tore open his mail, and showed his father a seal which his mother had placed on his arm when she discovered to him the secret of his birth, and bade him seek his father. The sight of his own signet rendered Rustum quite frantic; he cursed himself, attempting to put an end to his existence, and was only prevented by the efforts of his expiring son. After Sohrab's death, he burnt his tents and all his goods, and carried the corpse to Seistan, where it was interred; the army of Turan was, agreeably to the last request of Sohrab, permitted to cross the Oxus unmolested. To reconcile us to the improbability of this tale, we are informed that Rustum could have no idea his son was in existence. The mother of Sohrab had written to him her child was a daughter, fearing to lose her darling infant if she revealed the truth; and Rustum, as before stated, fought under a feigned name, an usage not uncommon in the chivalrous combats of those days." Malcolm summarizes the story (Vol. 1, p. 37, note) as told by Firdausi.

### THE SCHOLAR-GYPSY, p. 471

Arnold quotes in a note the following account from Joseph Glanvil's *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, ch. 20 (1661):

"There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond gypsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtility of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gypsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others: that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world an account of what he had learned." The quotation omits some phrases and sentences.

### THYRSIS, p. 477

Arnold was deeply attached to Oxford and its environs, where his enduring friendship for Clough was formed. In 1885 he said in a letter to his daughter: "I think Oxford is still, on the whole, the place in the world to which I am most attached." In a letter to his sister (Oct. 18, 1885), he said: "On Friday I got out to Hinksey and up the hill to within sight of the Cumner firs. I cannot describe the effect which this landscape always has on me—the hillside with its valleys, and Oxford in the great Thames valley below."

In a letter to his mother, April 7, 1866, he states that the diction of the poem was modeled on that of Theocritus, whom he had much read during the two years in which the poem was forming itself. He says: "The images are all from actual observation . . . The cuckoo on the wet June morning I heard in the garden at Woodford, and all those three stanzas you like are reminiscences of Woodford. Edward [his brother] has, I think, fixed on the two stanzas I like best myself in 'O easy access' and 'And long the way appears.' I also like 'Where is the girl?' and the stanza before it, but it is because they bring certain places and moments before me . . . It is probably too *quiet* a poem for the general taste, but I think it will stand wear."

Swinburne says of this poem: "The *Thyrsis* of Mr. Arnold makes a third with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*. It is not so easy as those may think who think by rote and praise by prescription to strike the balance between them. The first, however, remains first, and must remain; its five opening lines are to me the most musical in all known realms of verse; there is nothing like them; and it is more various, more simple, more large and sublime than the others . . . The least pathetic of the three is *Adonais*, which indeed is hardly pathetic at all; it is passionate, subtle, splendid; but *Thyrsis*, like *Lycidas*, has a quiet and tender undertone which gives it something of sacred. Shelley brings fire from heaven, but these bring also 'the meed of some melodious tear.' There is a grace ineffable, a sweet sound and sweet savor of things past, in the old beautiful use of the language of shepherds, of flocks and pipes: the spirit is none the less sad and sincere because the body of the poem has put on this dear familiar raiment of romance; because the crude and naked sorrow is veiled and chastened with soft shadows and sounds of a 'land that is very far off'; because the verse remembers and retains a perfume and an echo of Grecian flutes and flowers."—*Essays and Studies* (*Complete Works*, Vol. 15, p. 92.)

## WILLIAM ALLINGHAM
## (1824-89), p. 496

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Complete Works*, 6 vols. (Reeves, London, 1890).
*Poems*, selected and arranged by Helen Allingham (Macmillan, London, 1912).
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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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*Putnam's Magazine*, "New Poetry," July, 1856 (8:23-24).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Allingham (1824-89) was born in Ballyshannon, a seaport town in the County of Donegal, Ireland, where his mind was early filled with quaint legends and fancies. Receiving only a meager education, he worked in his father's bank, until in 1845 he received an appointment in the Customs service. As a young man he paid almost annual visits to England, in the course of which he became acquainted with many famous literary men, especially Rossetti. His first volume of *Poems* (1850) was followed, in 1854, by an enlarged edition of *Day and Night Songs* illustrated by Rossetti, Millais, and A. Hughes. Retiring from the Customs service in 1870, Allingham went to London as sub-editor (under Froude) of *Fraser's Magazine*. He succeeded to the editorship in 1874 and held the position five years. Thereafter he lived in retirement at Witley, in Surrey, and at Hampstead. His wife was Helen Paterson, a water-color artist of some distinction.

Allingham's principal publications were: *Poems*, 1850; *Day and Night Songs*, 1854; *Lawrence Bloomfield in Ireland*, 1864; *Fifty Modern Poems*, 1865; *Songs, Ballads, and Stories*, 1877; *Irish Songs and Poems*, 1887.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"He [Allingham] had a pretty light lyrical gift and considerable command of rhythm, succeeding best in the lilting strain, and under the inspiration of the scenes of nature amidst which he was brought up. 'He sang,' says his countryman, Mr. W. B. Yeats, 'Ballyshannon not Ireland,' and it may well be that the same critic is right in the opinion that to 'feel the entire fascination of his poetry, it is perhaps necessary to have spent one's childhood in one of those little seaboard Connaught towns.' There is a charming unsought naturalness in his little lays, as if he had, in his own words, 'found' them floating there."—H. Walker, *Literature of the Victorian Era*, pp. 569-70.

## WILLIAM JOHNSON CORY
## (1823-92), p. 497

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Ionica*, ed. by A. C. Benson (Allen, London, 1905).
*Ionica* (Allen, London, 1915).

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISMS

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Paul, Herbert: "The Author of *Ionica*," *Stray Leaves* (Lane, London, 1906). Same article in *Independent Review*, Jan., 1906 (8:88-102).
*Saturday Review*, "An Eton Master," Aug. 7, 1897 (84:145-46).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Cory (1823-92) was originally William Johnson. He was educated at Eton and later at Cambridge, where he was distinguished as a classical scholar. In 1845 he was made assistant master at Eton, and became "the most brilliant Eton tutor of his day." *Ionica*, his small collection of poems, written under the name of Johnson, was published in 1858. His prose work includes several textbooks on Latin and Greek subjects. After he inherited an estate in 1872 he gave up his work at Eton, and changed his name to Cory. He married late in life, spent four years in Madeira, and finally settled at Hampstead.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The little book *Ionica*—perhaps the smallest book of poems in Victorian literature which has an established place—is a perfect delight to fine judges of poetry. It is the work of a scholar as well as a man of feeling; and its chief defect, if defect it can be called, is that it happens to be too scholarly. The classical allusions compel the ordinary reader to study classical dictionaries in order to get at the meaning; and the meaning is sometimes so learned that even classical dictionaries do not help . . . This delicate poet, though a great classical scholar, was a supreme romantic in feeling."—L. Hearn, *A History of English Literature*, Vol. 2, p. 701.

## FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON
## (1821-95), p. 498

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*London Lyrics*, with introduction and notes by A. D. Godley (Methuen, London, 1903).
*Poems* (Stokes, New York, 1889).
*Rowfant Rhymes*, with an introduction by Austin Dobson (Rowfant Club, Cleveland, 1895).
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*Lyra Elegantiarum*, ed. by Frederick Locker-Lampson (Ward, London, 1891).
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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISMS

Birrell, A.: "A Connoisseur," *In the Name of the Bodleian* (Scribner, New York, 1905).
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Matthews, B.: "Frederick Locker," *Century Magazine*, Feb., 1883 (3:594-98).
*Notes and Queries*, "Publications of Frederick Locker-Lampson," April 16, 30; May 14, 1921 (8:307, 355, 397).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Frederick Locker (1821-95), who took the name of Lampson after his second marriage in 1874, has been described by his son-in-law, Augustine Birrell, as "essentially a man of the world." After twelve years of employment in government clerkships, where he eased the tedium of office by riming the events of the day, he married a daughter of the Earl of Elgin, and retired to dignified leisure. His hobby was the collection of rare books; his avocation was poetry; his business, in the intervals of dyspeptic attacks, was making friends among the most distinguished men and women of his time. His social graces, his wit, his unaffected refinement, were mirrored in his poetry; his only volume of verse, *London Lyrics*, was published in 1857 and had an immense success. His other literary work consisted in making collections of poetry which he admired: the *Lyra Elegantiarum* in 1867 and *Patchwork* in 1879. His autobiography, *My Confidences*, was published in 1896.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mr. Locker's verse has charmed so wisely and so long that it has traveled the full circle of compliment. . . . As you turn his pages, you feel as freshly as ever the sweet, old-world elegance, the courtly amiability, the mannerly restraint, the measured and accomplished ease. True, they are colorless; . . . but then they are so luminously limpid and serene, they are so sprightly and graceful and gay! In the gallantry they affect there is a something at once exquisite and paternal. If they pun, 'tis with an air: even thus might Chesterfield have stooped to folly. And then, how clean the English, how light yet vigorous the touch, the manner how elegant and how staid."—W. E. Henley, *Views and Reviews*, p. 116.

## TOM TAYLOR (1817-80), p. 499

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

*Appleton's Journal*, "Tom Taylor," Sept., 1880 (24:283-84).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tom Taylor (1817-80) filled his life with a diversity of occupations. He followed a brilliant career at the universities of Glasgow and Cambridge by successful work as tutor, professor of literature at the University of London, lawyer, secretary to the Board of Health, and art-critic. His most congenial employment, however, he found as a staff-writer and, after 1874, editor, of the humorous journal *Punch*, and as an actor and playwright. During his first year in London, 1844, he had four burlesques produced in the Lyceum Theatre; in subsequent years he gave some seventy plays to the stage, most of them domestic comedies. His *Masks and Faces*, written in collaboration with Charles Reade in 1852, *Our American Cousin*, and *The Ticket-of-leave Man* have a place in the history of the nineteenth-century drama. His occasional verses appeared in *Punch* and other journals.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

*To a Friend Lost*

[TOM TAYLOR]

When I remember, friend, whom lost I call,
Because a man beloved is taken hence,
The tender humor and the fire of sense
In your good eyes; how full of heart for all,
And chiefly for the weaker by the wall,
You bore that lamp of sane benevolence;
Then see I round you Death his shadows dense
Divide, and at your feet his emblems fall.
For surely are you one with the white host,
Spirits, whose memory is our vital air,
Through the great love of Earth they had: lo, these,
Like beams that throw the path on tossing seas,
Can bid us feel we keep them in the ghost,
Partakers of a strife they joyed to share.
—George Meredith

## GEORGE ELIOT (1819-80), p. 500

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

George Eliot (1819-80) was born Mary Ann Evans; she adopted her famous pen-name for the first time in 1857. She was only seventeen years old when the death of her mother left her the sole companion and the housekeeper of a strict and narrow-minded father, the manager of an old estate in Warwickshire. She found time, however, to follow her natural bent for classical languages and literatures, Italian, German, music, philosophy, and science. She had, too, a strong religious sense, which she early expressed in poetry. In 1841 she moved with her father to Coventry and there became intimate with a Mr. and Mrs. Bray, who introduced her to liberal books and opinions. She suffered in consequence a reaction, became a freethinker in religious and social matters, and was induced to continue attending church only by the dread of wounding too deeply her father's feelings. Her intellectual standpoint was thereafter unconventional, although it was tempered by a profound sympathy with the attitude of those with whom she could not agree. She began her independent life by doing editorial work and making translations in London. She made the acquaintance of well-known writers, and of the brilliant George Henry Lewes, with whom she entered into a relationship that was marriage in every respect except the name and the approval of society, for Lewes's first wife was not divorced. Under his care, her shy genius matured rapidly; she began the series of sketches called *Scenes of Clerical Life* (1858), and published in 1859 her remarkable *Adam Bede*, which at once made her famous. Its unusual sale and profits gave her financial independence, but not self-confidence. The fear of falling below her high standard fretted her into nervousness and drove her to exhausting efforts. For the writing of *Romola* she made in 1860 and 1861 visits to Florence and devoured a library of books on the Italian Renaissance. Always alert to advanced views in philosophy and social theory, and holding that her mission was to teach by means of art, she wove her opinions into the fabric of later novels and her long poem, *The Spanish Gypsy*, published in 1868. A volume of poems appeared in 1874. In her last years, she enjoyed the fruits of success and had, with Mr. Lewes, a secure social position and a host of interesting friends. In 1878 Mr. Lewes died; two years later she married J. W. Cross, an old friend. She lived, however, less than a year after her marriage.

George Eliot's principal publications were: *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 1858; *Adam Bede*, 1859; *The Mill on the Floss*, 1860; *Silas Marner*, 1861; *Romola*, 1863; *Felix Holt*, 1866; *The Spanish Gypsy*, 1868; *Agatha*, 1869; *Middlemarch*, 1872; *The Legend of Jubal and Other Poems*, 1874; *Daniel Deronda*, 1876; *Impressions of Theophrastuas Such*, 1879.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mrs. Lewes, though possessed of great intellect and sensibility, is not, in respect to metrical expression, a poet. Nor has she a full conception of the simple strength and melody of English verse. . . . That wealth of thought which atones for all her deficiencies in prose does not seem to be at her command in poetry. . . . A little poem in blank verse, entitled *O May I Join the Choir Invisible!* and setting forth her conception of the 'religion of humanity,' is worth all the rest of her poetry, for it is the outburst of an exalted soul foregoing personal immortality and compensated by a vision of the growth and happiness of the human race."—E. C. Stedman, *Victorian Poets*, p. 254.

## CHARLES TENNYSON TURNER
## (1808-79), p. 500

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Charles Tennyson Turner (1808-79), the elder brother of Alfred Lord Tennyson, changed his name to Turner in memory of a great-uncle from whom he inherited property. He shared his brother Alfred's tastes in literature and collaborated with him in the production of an early volume of verse, *Poems by Two Brothers*, in 1827. He married the sister of Emily Sellwood, who became Alfred Tennyson's wife, in 1836, and lived quietly as a clergyman in country parishes until ill health forced his retirement from professional work. Country life, flowers, horses, and dogs appealed greatly to his gentle nature; his life was happy and serene. Poetry was his principal avocation. A collection of sonnets in 1830 was praised by Coleridge; other collections in 1864, 1868, 1873, and 1880 gave him a contemporary reputation as a writer of sonnets almost equal to Wordsworth's. With the sonnets in these various collections were included a few short lyrics in other forms.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"His [Turner's] verse is saturated with the sense of his duties and his position as a parish priest . . . In reading the sonnets we can see him moving about in his parish, succoring the poor, consoling the sick, cheering the aged folk, and speaking kindly to the children; thinking, as he goes, of the news that had that day reached him from the great world, and with an eye ever open to new beauties and new phases of nature . . . The slightest incident, the most ordinary event of his daily life, is enough to stir his retiring muse; the first budding green of the spring, the later yellowing leaves of autumn still clinging to the trees, the harvest-field, the first note of cuckoo or nightingale, the coming of the swallows, the first ice in winter, the beautiful play of light through the lattice, the setting free of a prisoned bird, the impression made on his children by some new book—these are his themes; and he treats them with simplicity, grace, and occasional sustained beauty of phrase."—A. H. Japp, *The Poets and the Poetry of the Century*, ed. by A. H. Miles, Vol. 4, pp. 47-48.

## DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
## (1828-82), p. 501

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) was both a poet and a painter, and expressed his romantic and emotional nature similarly in the two arts. His background was Italian; for his father, mystic poet and student of Dante, and an exile from Italy because of his antagonism to Austrian rule, made his London home a gathering-place for Italian artists and musicians. Rossetti's boyhood was rich in cultural associations, but largely undisciplined. "As soon as a thing is imposed on me as an obligation," he later said, "my aptitude for doing it is gone." Becoming an art student at the Royal Academy in 1846, he found the training onerous and reacted violently against classical principles in contemporary painting, which he found conventional and uninspired. Taking as his master the radical painter, Ford Madox Brown, and associating himself with Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais, kindred spirits at the art school, he studied medieval painting and organized in 1848 the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which sought to combine a realistic fidelity in detail with a romantic mysticism in the general effect of their paintings. With his flowing brown hair and cynical dark eyes, an almost ascetic devotion to his work, and magnetic personal charm, Rossetti easily dominated the group. Its first paintings were labeled by the critics as "mere eccentricity"; but when John Ruskin, then a leader of public taste, defended them in two letters to the *Times*, 1850, they became generally admired. In 1856 three young Oxford men, Burne-Jones, Swinburne, and William Morris, were drawn into the Brotherhood. Essentially antagonistic to Rossetti in character, Morris yet found Rossetti's personality for a time irresistible; the two read the *Morte Darthur* together and talked in Rossetti's studio, littered with designs and manuscripts, until three o'clock of many mornings.

Meanwhile Rossetti had periodically abandoned painting for poetry, had written at fever heat such poems as *The Blessed Damozel*, and had returned with equal vigor to his other art. Much of his early poetry, including *The Blessed Damozel* and *My Sister's Sleep*, was printed in *The Germ*, a periodical founded by the Brotherhood in 1850 as an outlet for their writing and art. Rossetti's stimulus at this time came from the writings of Browning and Edgar Allan Poe, from the English folk-ballads, and from the medieval poets of Italy; he published in 1861 a collection of translations from the *Early Italian Poets*, later called *Dante and His Circle*. In many ways the decade from 1850 to 1860 was Rossetti's greatest period in both his arts.

In 1850 he became passionately attached to Elizabeth Siddal, a milliner's assistant with abilities in poetry and water-color painting, and a hectic, otherworldly beauty that was an embodiment of the Pre-Raphaelite ideal. She served Rossetti as the model for many of his greatest paintings, inspired many of the sonnets in *The House of Life*, and became his wife in 1860, although she was already doomed by tuberculosis. Rossetti's impatience and the irregularities of his life made his marriage hardly a placid one; yet, at his wife's death in 1862, he was so profoundly afflicted that he enclosed with her body in the coffin his most valuable possession, a bundle of manuscript poems that existed in no other form. He consented, however, to their disinterment in 1869; they formed the basis of his published collection of poems in 1870 and established his poetic reputation.

As his reputation grew, his income increased, and he was able to indulge his fondness for luxury without counting the notes that slipped through his fingers; yet his only relaxation from work was occasional dissipation. The result was insomnia; and, unable to bear the consequent lowering of his efficiency, he began to take chloral in gradually increasing doses. The drug brought on physical deterioration and distressing hallucinations. He came to feel the spirit of his dead wife near him in the form of birds; he was tormented by persecutory illusions, which were encouraged by a bitter attack on his morality in Buchanan's *Fleshly School of Poetry*, so that he felt himself insulted by passing strangers and broke with Browning because of a fancied aspersion in *Fifine at the Fair*. With William Morris at Kelmscott, and in the society of the friends which his charm still assured him, he found passing happiness; his genius still continued active and could inspire, even in his last tragic years, such poems as *The White Ship* and *The King's Tragedy*, published in 1881 as *Ballads and Sonnets*. But his great physical strength wore away until his death came finally as a relief in 1882.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"Rossetti takes his place in English literature as one of the six major poets of the later Victorian era, and as the oldest of the sub-group of three associated with the artistic revival vaguely known as Pre-Raphaelitism. . . . He possessed in an extraordinary degree both richness of imagination and the power to pack a world of meaning into one pregnant and melodious phrase. But both his pictorial faculty and his intellectual force were tempered by a strain of mysticism, for which he has been charged with obscurity by hard-headed and dull-witted readers. He was at once the most spiritual and the most material of poets; and the accusation of sensuality from which he was made to suffer could only result from inability to see more than one side of the Druid shield of his poetical personality."—W. M. Payne, Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature*, Vol. 21, pp. 12411-15.

"Consecrated, from his Italian parentage, to learning, art, and song—reared in a household over which the mediæval spirit has brooded—he [Rossetti] is thoroughly at home among romantic themes and processes, while a feeling like that of Dante exalts the maturer portion of his emblematic verse. . . . Throughout his poetry we discern a finesse, a regard for detail, and a knowledge of color and sound, that distinguish this master of the Neo-Romantic school. His end is gained by simplicity and sure precision of touch. He knows exactly what effect he desires, and produces it by a firm stroke of color, a beam of light, a single musical tone. . . . His lyrical faculty is exquisite; not often swift, but chaste, and purely English. . . . His verse is compact of tenderness, emotional ecstasy, and poetic fire. The spirit of the master whose name he bears clothes him as with a white garment. And we should expect his associates to be humble lovers of the beautiful, first of all, and through its ministry to rise to the lustrous upper heaven of spiritual art."—E. C. Stedman, *Victorian Poets*, pp. 360-366.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### *The Pre-Raphaelites*

The term Pre-Raphaelites was first applied to a group of young German artists who early in the nineteenth century formed a brotherhood in Rome for the purpose of restoring Christian art to the medieval purity of the masters in the age preceding the great Italian painter Raphael (1483-1520). The organization was short-lived, however, and the term was later used to designate the school in England originated by the following seven young men: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and his brother William Michael Rossetti, John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, Frederick George Stephens, Charles Collinson, and Thomas Woolner. They formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, and for a short time published *The Germ*, a magazine in which they announced their principles and published some of their poetical work.

The group reacted against the neo-classic imitative tendencies of much of the art of their own day and sought to attain the directness, the simplicity, the serious intention of Italian art before Raphael. Both their paintings and their writings were characterized by ornateness of style, love of sensuous beauty, minuteness of detail, and vaguely indefinite symbolism. These characteristics find their fullest expression in the highly-colored, mystical, imaginative early poems of Rossetti, in much of the work of William Morris, and in some of Swinburne's.

### THE BLESSED DAMOZEL, p. 501

There are three versions of this poem, which was written in 1847, when Rossetti was eighteen years of age: one published in *The Germ* in 1850; one in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, 1856; and one in the *Poems* of 1870. Changes appearing in the second and third versions are regarded as distinct improvements; but Swinburne states that the original readings were often so good that nobody without Rossetti's "insatiable passion for the best" would have been dissatisfied with them.

"Though at first sight," says A. C. Benson, "the delicate archaic handling of language is a great attraction, yet it is the combination of vastness and nearness in the poem which lends it an incomparable charm."—*Rossetti*, p. 114.

### MARY MAGDALENE, p. 525

Rossetti gives the following description of the oil painting of 1865, the theme of which was the basis of this sonnet:

"The scene represents two houses opposite each other, one of which is that of Simon the Pharisee, where Christ and Simon, with other guests, are seated at table. In the opposite house a great banquet is held, and feasters are trooping to it dressed in cloth of gold and crowned with flowers. The musicians play at the door, and each couple kiss as they enter. Mary Magdalene has been in this procession, but has suddenly turned aside at the sight of Christ, and is pressing forward up the steps of Simon's house, and casting the roses from her hair. Her lover and a woman have followed her out of the procession and are laughingly trying to turn her back. The woman bars the door with her arm. Those nearest the Magdalene in the group of feasters have stopped short in wonder and are looking after her, while a beggar-girl offers them flowers from her basket. A girl near the front of the procession has caught sight of Mary and waves her garland to turn her back. Beyond this, the narrow street abuts on the highroad and river. The young girl seated on the steps is a little beggar who has had food given her from within the house, and is wondering to see Mary go in there, knowing her as a famous woman in the city. Simon looks disdainfully at her, and the servant who is setting a dish on the table smiles, knowing her too. Christ looks toward her from within, waiting till she shall reach him."

### THE SONNET, p. 527

In 1880, Rossetti presented his mother on her birthday with a volume of English sonnets in which he had drawn a design illustrating his *Sonnet on the Sonnet.* He thus explained its symbolism in an accompany letter:

"I have no doubt that your discerning eyes plucked out the heart of the mystery in the little design. In it the Soul is instituting the 'memorial to one dead deathless hour,' a ceremony easily effected by placing a winged hour-glass in a rose-bush, at the same time that she touches the fourteen-stringed harp of the Sonnet, hanging round her neck. On the rose-branches trailing over in the opposite corner is seen hanging the Coin, which is the second symbol used for the Sonnet. Its 'face' bears the Soul, expressed in the butterfly; its 'converse,' the Serpent of Eternity enclosing the Alpha and Omega."

### THE KING'S TRAGEDY, p. 544

Lines 316-322 of the poem are adapted from Stanza 34 of *The King's Quair* as follows:

Worschippeth, ȝe that loueris bene, this May,
  For of your blisse the kalendis are begonne,
And sing with vs, away, Winter, away!
  Cum, Somer, cum, the suete sesoun and sonne!
  Awake for schame! that haue ȝour hevynnis wonne,
And amorously lift vp ȝour hedis all,
Thank Lufe that list ȝou to his merci call.

Lines 327-30 are from Stanza 40.
Lines 331-32 are from Stanza 42.
Lines 339-45 are from Stanza 193.
Lines 346-52 are from Stanza 187.
Lines 370-76 are from Stanza 162.
Lines 378-80 are from Stanza 14.

## CHRISTINA ROSSETTI
## (1830-94), p. 553

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-94) was the younger sister of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and the earlier period of her life was closely intertwined with his. Reared in the same cultured environment as he, and influenced by his artistic principles, she contributed verses to the Pre-Raphaelite organ, *The Germ*, and published in 1862 her romantic *Goblin Market, and Other Poems.* Her pale, serious beauty made her a favorite model for her brother in his paintings of the Virgin. Excursions into the country gave her an intimate acquaintance with scenes within a fifty-mile radius of London; she made friends with all animals, even snakes and toads; she symbolized every object that she encountered, and found ethical principles embodied in bits of glass and fragments of stone. After visits to the Continent in 1861 and 1866, her life grew restricted; she cared for her father and mother in prolonged illnesses, and thereafter found other invalid relatives to claim her care. Devout from childhood, she became increasingly preoccupied with religious thoughts. In 1866 she refused a suitor whom she loved, because he was "either not a Christian at all, or else he was a Christian of undefined or heterodox views." Her later poetry was designed almost wholly for religious instruction. Her health was precarious, and in 1871 she acquired a disease that gave her portliness and confined her to her house in Bloomsbury, London. In a small upper back bedroom she did her writing, closing her eyes to evoke mental pictures; she conducted regular household devotions, and prayed a half an hour each night before retiring. Blessed with a quaint humor and great moral courage, she never alluded in conversation to her illness. At length, a cancer sapped her strength and ended her life.

Christina Rossetti's principal publications were: *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, 1862; *The Prince's Progress*, 1866; *Commonplace*, 1870; *Sing Song*, 1872; *Seek and Find*, 1879; *A Pageant*, 1881; *Called to Be Saints*, 1881; *Letter and Spirit*, 1882; *Time Flies*, 1885; *The Face of the Deep*, 1892; *Verses*, 1893; *New Poems* (ed. by W. M. Rossetti), 1896.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"A power of seeing finely beyond the scope of ordinary vision; that, in a few words, is the note of Miss Rossetti's genius, and it brings with it a subtle . . . power of expressing subtle . . . conceptions; always clearly, always simply, with a singular and often startling homeliness, which is the sincerity of a style that seems to be innocently unaware of its own beauty. This power is shown in every division of her poetry; in the peculiar witchery of the poems dealing with the supernatural, in the exaltation of the poems of devotion, in the lyrical quality of the songs of children, birds, and corn, in the special variety and the special excellence of the poems of passion and meditation. The union of homely yet always select literalness of treatment with mystical visionariness, or visionariness which is sometimes mystical, constitutes the peculiar quality of her poetry."—A. Symons, *Studies in Two Literatures*, p. 139.

"Miss Rossetti, in her sacred poems, brings together all the elements of art's excellence and of a Christian faith. Their chief note, their unique interest and delight, is a tenderness in them, a tremulous and wistful beauty of adoration, rising and passing, at times, into something like a very joyous adoration of friend by friend. . . . And with this sense of attaining and perceptive faith comes a further sense, of absolute reality. . . . The Paradisal imageries, crowns, palms, flames, all the 'furniture of heaven,' becomes to us in her poetry as real, visible, tangible as altars upon earth; the golden trumpets and harps, the multitudinous music of the Saints and Angels, ring through the triumphing chaunts of her later verse."—Lionel Johnson, *Academy*, July 25, 1896 (Vol. 50, p. 59).

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### GOBLIN MARKET, p. 559

This poem, says J. A. Noble, "may be read and enjoyed merely as a charming fairy-fantasy, and as such it is delightful and satisfying; but behind the simple story of the two children and the goblin fruit-sellers is a little spiritual drama of love's vicarious redemption, in which the child redeemer goes into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, that by her painful conquest she may succor and save the sister who has been vanquished and all but slain."—*Impressions and Memories*, p. 59.

This symbolic interpretation, although in a less distinctive manner, is accepted by other authorities.

## COVENTRY PATMORE
## (1823-96), p. 567

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Coventry Patmore (1812-96) had a somewhat unfortunate youth which tended to develop in him self-centered eccentricities. By a father who followed literature as a profession but was regarded socially as a cad, and by doting relatives, he was fatuously praised; he early learned to repeat the familiar words: "Coventry is a clever fellow." Beneath his display of arrogance, however, lay a tenderness that was quick to love and to receive love; and beneath his intellectual self-sufficiency was a mysticism that inclined him, as he grew older, toward transcendental philosophy and fervent religious experience. Tall, angular, and shy, he unveiled his attractive soul only to his friends, to the women whom he loved, and to the readers of his poetry. Among his friends, Tennyson was of the most influence; to him was due the gradual improvement of Patmore's technique in verse; the Pre-Raphaelites accepted him as champion and adviser. Among the women whom he idealized, the most important was Emily Andrews, exquisite in person and sympathetic in mind, whom he married in 1847. Their relationship was the embodiment of an almost religious conception of wedded love which became the theme of *The Angel in the House.* The last part of this poem, *The Victories of Love*, reflects Mrs. Patmore's lingering illness and his anticipations of her early death. *The Angel in the House*, printed in parts from 1854 to 1862, won Patmore a gradually increasing popularity with the reading public until it became perhaps more generally loved than any other poem of the age. His wife's death in 1862 turned Patmore's thoughts toward religion even more strongly than before, until, under the influence of a Miss Byles, whom he married in 1864, he became a Roman Catholic. His second wife brought him wealth, with which he retired to an estate in Sussex; there, no longer dependent on his public, he began a vast and mysterious poem, of a more mystical and transcendental order than his previous writings; of this work nine odes printed in 1868 are the fragments. At Hastings, where he removed in 1875, he carried the work still farther, and wrote, under the stimulus of what he called "a flash of spiritual health" and an exaltation of imaginative fervor, the odes which were published as *The Unknown Eros* in 1877. Edmund Gosse has described him walking by the sea, a gale blowing back his coat from his erect, thin figure, while he meditated on the great mysteries of spiritual love. Somewhat isolated in his last year by the receding of fame, but mellowed by congenial friendships, he lived on with unimpaired mind until 1896.

Patmore's principal publications were: *Poems*, 1844; *Tamerton Church Tower*, 1853; *The Angel in the House*, 1854-62; *Odes*, 1868; *Collected Works* (including *The Unknown Eros and Other Odes*), 1877; *Amelia*, 1878; *Principle in Art*, 1889; *Religio Poetæ*, 1893; *Rod, Root and Flower*, 1895.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"The trivial realism of the narrative in *The Angel in the House* attracted a multitude of readers and at the same time obscured the splendor of the essential part of the poem, so that the very popularity of Patmore's great undertaking delayed and falsified his ultimate success. That success consisted, not in the mild adventures of Honoria and her spouse, but in the magnificence of the philosophical episodes, in which the psychology of love is illustrated in language of great originality and with turns of the most felicitous fancy. . . . More charming are the odes devoted to sentiments of remorse, of recollection, or of poignant *desiderium*, the hopeless longing for a vanished face. In these categories *The Azalea*, *The Toys*, and *Departure* rank among the finest examples remaining to us of pure Victorian poetry. . . . But some parts of *The Unknown Eros* . . . are more abstruse. In the sacramental odes Patmore is often metaphysical, and sometimes dark with excess of ingenuity. His mystical Catholic poetry is inspired by a study of St. Thomas Aquinas among the ancients and of St. John of the Cross among the moderns. As he pursued his lonely meditations, his odes became more and more exclusively occupied with the religious symbolism of sex. . . . Perhaps in the latest of all his poems . . . written in 1880, Patmore carries his mystical ecstasy to its most transcendental height, where few can follow him."—Edmund Gosse, *The English Poets*, ed. by T. H. Ward, Vol. 5, pp. 231-34.

"*The Angel in the House* first appeared in 1854 and may be said to be . . . a kind of half-conscious, half-unconscious revolt against both Tennyson and Browning, but especially against the former. Revolt, indeed, may seem too fierce a word for the mild domesticities of Patmore's poem. . . . The poem contained, even at the first, much pretty verse; as it went on, it was to contain not a little that is positively beautiful. But its ambling versification—somniferous to some of those whom it did not merely please, and positively irritating to others—the deliberate banality of the subject; and the equally deliberate adoption of language outgoing even Wordsworth, even Crabbe, in its avoidance of poetic diction, though they conciliated a large part of contemporary taste, produced a by no means conciliatory effect upon another part which, in the long run, has prevailed. When a man writes

> Our witnesses the cook and groom,
> We signed the lease for seven years more,

it is not unreasonable to think that Apollo, if he thought it worth his while, must have twitched the poet's ear rather sharply and that attention should have been paid to the twitch. The scornful allusion 'idylls of the dining-room and the deanery,' though its author, Swinburne, was courteous enough not to name the idyllist, expressed a good deal of the younger and youngest opinion of the time."—G. Saintsbury, *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. 13, pp. 190-91.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### THE TOYS, p. 571

Mrs. Patmore died in 1862, and after that date the five children of the family formed Patmore's "principal solicitude." Edmund Gosse says: "He loved them and they seem to have been both intelligent and well-behaved. But he suffered cruelly from the utterly impossible standard of conduct which he placed before them. . . .

"The constant strain of responsibility for these young motherless creatures was very trying to his nerves. He gave the subject a consideration too constant, and he lost, in his lonely excitement, a sense of proportion. All the little wayward errors which a mother deals with so patiently, corrects so gently and says nothing about, took monstrous proportions to this austere idealist, with his impossible expectations. He was driven to an exaggeration which must make us smile. He wrote: 'I have indeed very little respect for children. Their so-called innocence is want of practice rather than inclination, and all bad passions seem to me to be more violent in children than in men and women, and more wicked because in more immediate conjunction with the divine vision.' . . .

"It was at this time, and after one of these painful moods, that he wrote the ode called *The Toys*, which illustrates, with more delicacy and truth of analysis than any biographer can hope to seize, the ceaseless oscillation of his spirit between severity and tenderness. It is a 'document' of the highest possible value to us in forming a just notion of the temperament of Patmore."—E. Gosse, *Coventry Patmore*, pp. 99-100.

## JAMES THOMSON (1834-82), p. 573

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Thomson (1834-82) symbolized the romantic quality of his genius by signing his poems "Bysshe Vanolis" or "B.V.," in honor of Shelley, and of Novalis, the pen name of Friedrich Leopold (1772-1801), German romantic poet and novelist. Thomson's personality was tragically complex. He was at times one of the most attractive of men—friendly, gay-hearted, alert, sensitive; at other times he was mastered by a melancholy that drove him to dissipation and despair. Perhaps an inheritance from his father, this morbidity was encouraged by certain events of his life. He was left an orphan at the age of eight; he was forced by poverty to live in dismal rooms and to make loans which he could not repay; he lost his early religious faith and could find only a gloomy agnosticism to replace it. His early poems, written for liberal journals, often show the gayety and the courage that won him a wide circle of devoted friends; after 1866, however, he sank lower in melancholy and was tormented by insomnia until, at a low ebb of spirits in 1874, he wrote his *City of Dreadful Night*. For the next seven years he composed practically nothing. In 1880 the first publication of his poems as a volume, and the cordial praise that Meredith and others gave him restored his hope. He began in the next year once more to write poetry in his gayest vein. A visit with friends in Leicestershire, during the winter of 1881-82, was one of the happiest episodes of his life. Yet his melancholy returned; he drank himself into madness, wandered homelessly in London alleys, and died from exhaustion in 1882.

Thomson's principal publications were: *The City of Dreadful Night, and Other Poems*, 1880; *Vane's Story, Weddah and Om-el-Bonain, and Other Poems*, 1881; *Essays and Phantasies*, 1881; *A Voice from the Nile and Other Poems*, 1884; *Satires and Profanities*, 1884; *Poems, Essays, and Fragments*, 1892.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"There is no need at this time of day to argue for or against the philosophy of life in which James Thomson took refuge. His despair was inevitable in a man of his temperament, born and circumstanced as he was. . . . *The City of Dreadful Night* is not a comfortable poem, nor is it addressed to 'the hopeful young,' or those to whom 'the shows of life' suffice, or those who find comfort in a heaven above or a heaven on earth. Such persons are expressly warned off by the poet himself. It is, however, the most faithful and magnificent expression of the spirit of despair in all modern poetry; it is brave, and it is supremely honest. It should be read as *Ecclesiastes* or Æschylus should be read, not for the sustenance of faith and hope, but for purification through pity and fear."—G. H. Gerould, Introduction to *Poems of James Thomson*, pp. xvii ff.

"Of lighter strain, written when the poet could still be happy, are *Sunday at Hampstead* and *Sunday up the River*, . . . and one or two others . . . such as *The Fire That Filled My Heart of Old*. . . . Even against these the charge of a monotonous, narrow, and irrational misery has been brought. But what saves Thomson is the perfection with which he expresses the negative and hopeless side of the sense of mystery, of the Unseen; just as Miss Rossetti expresses the positive and hopeful one. No two contemporary poets perhaps ever completed each other in a more curious way than this Bohemian atheist and this devout lady."—G. Saintsbury, *A History of Nineteenth Century Literature*, p. 298.

## GEORGE MEREDITH
## (1828-1909), p. 590

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

George Meredith (1828-1909) was early in his youth made self-dependent by the extravagance of his father, a rakish tailor of Portsmouth. His formal education was cut short after a year in 1843-44 at a German school; during an apprenticeship with a London lawyer, he lived precariously on a bowl of porridge a day, and continued his education by his own efforts. In 1848 he turned to journalism and began to contribute poetry to periodicals. Handsome, with an athletic build and chestnut-red hair, and gifted with extraordinary brilliance in conversation, he was welcomed in London Bohemian circles. In 1849 he made an unfortunate match with the beautiful but flighty daughter of Thomas Love Peacock, from whom he separated in 1858. Their gradual estrangement is studied in Meredith's poem *Modern Love*, which he published with other verse in 1862. Meanwhile he had published in 1859 *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, the first of his novels.

His more serious work not proving profitable, Meredith continued to support himself by what he called "the Egyptian bondage" of journalism and reading for publishers. After a journey in the Alps and an unsuccessful attempt to share a London house with Swinburne and Rossetti, he married in 1864 the charming Marie Vulliamy, and established a permanent home at Flint Cottage, near Box Hill in Surrey, where the scenery had a romantic quality rare in England. In the hills behind his house he put up a Norwegian châlet, slung a hammock from the beams, and lived there while he wrote novels and his *Poems and Lyrics of the Joyous Earth*, published in 1883. Fastidious, an excellent judge of wine and cigars, he combined social graces with a passion for the out-of-doors, and made long tramps over the hills to keep fresh his contact with the primal earth, which he loved as the stern but wholesome mother of mankind.

With the publication of *The Egoist* in 1879 and *Diana of the Crossways* in 1885, Meredith was surprised to find himself at last famous and Box Hill invaded by curious visitors. Whatever joy he might have taken in this long-deferred fame was destroyed by his own ill-health and the mortal illness of his wife; he was forced to give up walking; and, as he said: "When I ceased to walk briskly, part of my life was ended." Under these somber circumstances he published his *Poems of Tragic Life* and *A Reading of Earth* in 1887 and

1888. In 1894 he closed his work as a novelist with *The Amazing Marriage*, but continued to write and publish volumes of verse. He served in his last years as literary arbiter to the world; his critical opinions were widely quoted and much respected. Crippled, he yet insisted on being wheeled out of doors in his chair, in sunshine or rain. When he died, he was buried in the quiet cemetery at Dorking instead of at Westminster Abbey; for, as he said, "better the green grass turf than Abbey pavements."

Meredith's principal publications were: *Poems*, 1851; *The Shaving of Shagpat*, 1856; *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, 1859; *Evan Harrington*, 1861; *Modern Love and Poems of the English Roadside*, 1862; *Rhoda Fleming*, 1865; *Vittoria*, 1867; *Beauchamp's Career*, 1876; *On the Idea of Comedy, and of the Uses of the Comic Spirit*, 1877; *The Egoist*, 1879; *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*, 1883; *Diana of the Crossways*, 1885; *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life*, 1887; *A Reading of the Earth*, 1888; *One of Our Conquerors*, 1891; *Poems*, 1892; *Lord Ormont and His Aminta*, 1894; *The Amazing Marriage*, 1895; *Odes in Contribution to the Songs of French History*, 1898; *A Reading of Life*, 1901; *Last Poems*, 1909; *Celt and Saxon*, 1910; *Up to Midnight*, 1913.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"To Meredith poetry has come to be a kind of imaginative logic, and almost the whole of his later work is a reasoning in verse. He reasons, not always clearly to the eye, and never satisfyingly to the ear, but with a fiery intelligence which has more passion than most poets put into frankly emotional verse. He reasons in pictures, every line having its imagery, and he uses pictorial words to express abstract ideas. Disdaining the common subjects of poetry, as he disdains common rhythms, common rhymes, and common language, he does much by his enormous vitality to give human warmth to arguments concerning humanity. He does much, though he attempts the impossible."—A. Symons, *Figures of Several Centuries*, p. 151.

"Though no one speaks less from a chair or pulpit, Mr. Meredith stands to be judged as a teacher and prophet. He is not content to be an observer. . . . Mr. Meredith's ethic is best applied in his prose and best expounded in his verse, though his verse comes, far less often than his prose, to rightness of form. He has his own divinity, pagan by name. Where other writers appeal to God or to Humanity, he speaks, somewhat insistently, of the Earth; and the Earth is not the malign step-mother of pessimistic theory, but a stern genial mother, if at times something of a governess. . . . . Earth lends us our bodies, our fund of power, and our capital of instinct, which may be turned to uses fruitful or sterile. Our life is the adjustment and realization of the forces that Earth has given us. It is love, rightly understood, that tasks and rewards our power of directing those forces. Such love helps us, in its better forms, to the vision of 'nobler races'. . . . The creed is not unlike Carlyle's in its courage, but it is more possible, less savage, and less solitary."—Oliver Elton, *Modern Studies*, p. 241.

## WILLIAM MORRIS
## (1834-96), p. 608

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

For William Morris (1834-96) poetry was the relaxation of a life seriously devoted to great aims in painting, architecture, craftsmanship, and the improvement of human society. He was born in London, the son of a well-to-do broker. As a child he became familiar with the Waverley novels, and by the time he was fourteen he had developed a taste for architecture and a love for the medieval. He learned as a schoolboy, he said, "most of what was to be known about English Gothic." Influenced by the Oxford Movement[1], he entered Exeter College, Oxford, in 1853 with the intention of taking holy orders; for a time he thought of founding a monastery where he could devote himself to the production of religious art. His Oxford career brought him into intimate contact with Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and other Pre-Raphaelites and greatly enlarged his interests; he learned to appreciate Chaucer and Malory, and made his first acquaintance with northern mythology and epic. In 1855, while on a tour in northern France with Burne-Jones, he became so impressed with the glories of the French cathedrals that he abandoned his plan to enter the church and decided to devote himself to art; he gave himself first to architecture, then to painting. It was while he was employed with Rossetti and Burne-Jones in frescoing the walls of the Oxford Union that he met Jane Burden, whom he married in 1859.

Morris had already attracted attention as a poet. Early in his career at Oxford he had written verse of great originality and had published some of his poems, with several remarkable prose tales, in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (1856), an undergraduate publication which he had founded and supported. Then at London, under the stimulation of Rossetti, he published in 1858 his *Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems*, a volume that clearly showed Pre-Raphaelite influences.

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[1] See the Biographical Sketch of Cardinal Newman, second paragraph, p. 950.

He gave up poetry, however, for the following seven years to plunge into a new project designed to elevate the artistic standards of articles manufactured for use in common life. In company with the Pre-Raphaelites and other friends, he built workshops for the production of many articles, from furniture and glassware to cotton goods and wall-paper, with a new beauty in place of the ugliness usual in such manufacture. Among other innovations was the chair, designed to combine simplicity with comfort, that still bears his name.

In 1866, when this business was operating smoothly, Morris again began to write poetry, this time in a manner more simple, more Chaucerian, than his earlier inarticulate style. During four years he produced the successive parts of *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70), writing with fluency and pleasure; one portion, growing too large for inclusion with the others, he published separately in 1867 as *The Life and Death of Jason*, which proved him a master of romantic narrative. When these Greek legends had been retold, Morris became fascinated with the Icelandic sagas, studied the language under a tutor, published his translation of the *Volsunga Saga* in 1870, made a journey to Iceland in the following year, and returned so much in the mood of the old sculds that he made other translations in 1874 and published his *Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs* in 1876.

Morris's literary activities were again interrupted by the pressure of other interests. At his home at Kelmscott Manor House, near London, he set up a press dedicated to artistic printing, the crowning achievement of which was the Kelmscott edition of Chaucer, issued in 1896. During the eighties his chief concern, however, was with industrial organization, which was of such a sort, he felt, that true craftsmanship was impossible. He therefore came to advocate state socialism as a corrective for the dehumanization of industry, worked as an ardent leader in radical workingmen's societies, and delivered addresses in halls and in the streets in an effort to make his views prevail. The finest expression of this attitude is his *Dream of John Ball*, published in 1888. By 1890 Morris had come to believe that socialism was impracticable, but he did not cease to expound the theory, so clearly involved with his standards of art, until his death.

After 1889 Morris found leisure to withdraw from strenuous actuality for an occasional excursion into prose romance. His *News from Nowhere* (1890) is a socialistic romance of the future; his series of prose tales, interspersed with lyrics, began with *The House of the Wolfings* in 1889 and included *The Well at the World's End* in 1896. In 1895 his health declined under the pressure of his work; and his strenuous, high-minded, and singularly devoted life ended in the following year.

Morris's principal publications were: *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, 1858; *The Life and Death of Jason*, 1867; *The Earthly Paradise*, 1868-70; *Love Is Enough*, 1872; *Three Northern Love Stories* (with E. Magnusson), 1875; *The Æneids of Virgil*, 1876; *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs*, 1876; *Hopes and Fears for Art*, 1882; *The Odyssey of Homer*, 1887; *A Dream of John Ball*, 1888; *Signs of Change*, 1888; *A Tale of the House of the Wolfings*, 1889; *News from Nowhere*, 1890; *Poems by the Way*, 1891; *Gothic Architecture*, 1893; *The Tale of a Beowulf* (with A. J. Wyatt), 1895; *The Well at the World's End*, 1896; *Old French Romances*, 1896; *The Sundering Flood*, 1897; *Architecture, Industry and Wealth* (collected papers), 1902.

## INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"One thinks of Morris as a man who wished to make the world as beautiful as an illuminated manuscript. He loved the bright colors, the gold, the little strange insets of landscape, the exquisite craftsmanship of decoration, in which the genius of the medieval illuminators expressed itself. His Utopia meant the restoration, not so much of the soul of man, as of the selected delights of the arts and crafts of the Middle Ages."—R. Lynd, *The Art of Letters*, p. 150.

"There are two important characteristics that individualize Morris's poetic work, and differentiate it from that of his contemporaries. The most obvious thing about his work as an artist, whether the work be a wall-paper or an epic, is . . . spaciousness of design. Large effects, ample spaces of beauty, diffusion rather than concentration, were what he aimed at . . . . It is this quality of workmanship that makes quotation from Morris unsatisfactory . . . . The second characteristic is directness of method . . . . Without it his spaciousness of design might have spelt mere prolixity and incoherence; . . . it gives lucidity . . . to his work . . . . It is a part of the old-world atmosphere he brought into modern literature, and shows how fully he had incorporated into blood and marrow the old legends and sagas."—A. Compton-Rickett, *William Morris*, pp. 114-19.

"To democratize art and to ennoble and beautify common daily work was the aim of William Morris in his earnest crusade for the cause of art and for the cause of humanity. Morris desired for every human being a fair share of the nobler joys of living and of being. He declared that it is wrong to shut one's eyes to ugliness and to vulgarity wherever found, or to acquiesce in them as either desirable or necessary. Though he approached the social question from the side of art, he was not merely an æsthete. He saw very clearly that economic conditions lie back of the wretchedness, the vulgarity, the narrowness, and the ugliness that too frequently make up the larger part of the life of the masses. He insisted further that the rich, with all of their power and their dominion over the earth, cannot escape from sharing in some degree the degradation of the worker who produces the wares which all must buy, rich and poor alike. The present age, by denying a fair share of the joys and satisfactions of life to the laborer, diminishes the real joys and satisfactions of life for the rich. The vulgarization of the worker lowers the level of life for all."—A. von Helmholtz-Phelan, *The Social Philosophy of William Morris*, p. 3.

### CRITICAL NOTES

Some of the poems in Morris's first volume of verse—*The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems*—show influences of Pre-Raphaelitism (see note on The Pre-Raphaelites, p. 1008). Morris early became associated with Rossetti and Burne-Jones and shared with them an enthusiasm for attempting to identify art with life. Fascinated as he was by medieval life, its illuminated manuscripts, its beauty of architectural design, its mysticism, it was but natural that his early poetry especially should bear the inevitable Pre-Raphaelite characteristics of richness of decorative color, dimness of outline, tangled and obscure utterances, and tantalizing mysteriousness. Poems on pages 608-630, inclusive, of this book appeared in Morris's first volume.

### THE DEFENCE OF GUENEVERE, p. 609

Guenevere, the wife of King Arthur, being charged with adultery and twice under sentence of death by fire, speaks in this poem in her own defence. Two important incidents, as related by Malory in *Morte Darthur* (19-20), lie back of the poem—(1) While Guenevere was enjoying a holiday with her unarmed knights, she was carried off by Sir Meliagrance and his band (lines 168 ff.) to Meliagrance's castle, la Fausse Garde, and held prisoner until she was rescued by Lancelot. In gaining entrance to Guenevere's chamber one night, Lancelot cut his arm on the bars of the window; the blood that Meliagrance discovered the next morning on the bed came from Lancelot's wound, although Meliagrance charged the Queen with having received one of her wounded knights who had been close by in the castle. Lancelot agreed to prove the Queen's innocence later in a combat with Meliagrance. While Lancelot was being shown about the castle, he stepped upon a trap (line 190) and fell into a cave full of straw. He managed to escape in time to keep his appointment at the combat, in which he killed Meliagrance and saved Guenevere from the fire. (2) At a later time, Lancelot was found in Guenevere's chamber by fourteen knights who had previously laid a trap to catch the lovers. Lancelot killed thirteen of the knights, including Gawaine's two sons and brother Agravaine; Modred, a half-brother of Gawaine, escaped. After this episode, Guenevere was again condemned to be burned. It is at this second trial that she speaks in this poem.

Morris follows Malory's account rather closely except in two details—Gawaine was not present at the fight in the Queen's chamber, and he was not an accuser of the Queen; on the contrary, he spoke most vigorously in her defence. For some unexplained reason Morris presents Gawaine as an accuser. (See G. H. Maynadier's *The Arthur of the English Poets*, pp. 357-360.)

**Page 612, line 242.** The story of the fight in Guenevere's chamber is thus related by Malory, Book 20, Chapter 4:

> And therewith Sir Launcelot wrapped his mantle about his arm well and surely; and by then they had gotten a great form out of the hall, and therewithal they rashed at the door. Fair lords, said Sir Launcelot, leave your noise and your rashing, and I shall set open this door, and then may ye do with me what it liketh you. Come off then, said they all, and do it, for it availeth thee not to strive against us all; and therefore let us into this chamber, and we shall save thy life until thou come to King Arthur. Then Launcelot unbarred the door, and with his left hand he held it open a little, so that but one man might come in at once; and so there came striding a good knight, a much man and large, and his name was Colgrevance of Gore, and he with a sword struck at Sir Launcelot mightily; and he put aside the stroke and gave him such a buffet upon the helmet, that he fell grovelling dead within the chamber door. And then Sir Launcelot with great might drew that dead knight within the chamber door; and Sir Launcelot with help of the queen and her ladies was lightly armed in Sir Colgrevance's armour. And ever stood Sir Agravaine and Sir Modred crying: Traitor knight, come out of the queen's chamber. Leave your noise, said Sir Launcelot unto Sir Agravaine, for wit you well, Sir Agravaine, ye shall not prison me this night; and therefore an ye do by my counsel, go ye all from this chamber door, and make not such crying and such manner of slander as ye do; for I promise you by my knighthood, an ye will depart and make no more noise, I shall as to-morn appear afore you all before the king, and then let it be seen which of you all, outher else ye all, that will accuse me of treason; and there I shall answer you as a knight should, that hither I came to the queen for no manner of mal engine, and that will I prove and make it good upon you with my hands. Fie on thee, traitor, said Sir Agravaine and Sir Modred, we will have thee maugre thy head, and slay thee if we list; for we let thee wit we have the choice of King Arthur to save thee or to slay thee. Ah sirs, said Sir Launcelot, is there none other grace with you? then keep yourself. So then Sir Launcelot set all open the chamber door, and mightily and knightly he strode in amongst them; and anon at the first buffet he slew Sir Agravaine. And twelve of his fellows after, within a little while after, he laid them cold to the earth, for there was none of the twelve that might stand Sir Launcelot one buffet. Also Sir Launcelot wounded Sir Modred, and he fled with all his might. And then Sir Launcelot returned again unto the queen, and said: Madam, now wit you well all our true love is brought to an end, for now will King Arthur ever be my foe; and therefore, madam, an it like you that I may have you with me, I shall save you from all manner adventures dangerous. That is not best, said the queen; meseemeth now ye have done so much harm, it will be best ye hold you still with this. And if ye see that as to-morn they will put me unto death, then may ye rescue me as ye think best. I will well, said Sir Launcelot, for have ye no doubt, while I am living I shall rescue you. And then he kissed her, and either gave other a ring; and so there he left the queen, and went until his lodging.

### RAPUNZEL, p. 613

*Rapunzel* was included in Morris's first volume of poetry—*The Defence of Guenevere, and Other Poems* (1858). Alfred Noyes calls it "the most bewitching of all the poems in this book. Its elaborate metrical scheme is in itself a complete refutation of what has been said about Morris's lack of technique; and it is a most brilliantly successful voyage across the perilous sea that washes fairylands forlorn, full of delicate beauty, and deliciously mediæval."—*William Morris*, by Alfred Noyes, p. 29.

The story of Rapunzel belongs to folk-lore. It is told as follows in the Grimm Brothers' collection of Fairy Tales: A man and his wife, eagerly looking forward to the birth of their long-desired child, lived near the house and garden of a witch. To satisfy his wife's craving the man stole some vegetables from the garden, but was caught by the witch who demanded the unborn child as payment for the theft. The man agreed, and the new-born girl was delivered to the witch, who named her Rapunzel, and at the end of twelve years confined her in a lonely tower with no opening except a small window at the top. Through this, at the command of the witch, Rapunzel daily let down her long golden hair for the witch to use in climbing to the window.

It happened that a prince, passing through the forest surrounding the tower, saw the beautiful girl and loved her. Observing the method used by the witch to gain entrance to the tower, he used it also, and thereafter paid nightly visits to Rapunzel. The witch, soon discovered their secret, cut off the golden hair of Rapunzel, and carried her away to the desert. She awaited in the tower a visit from the prince, who was ignorant of what had happened, and so frightened him that he fell from the window into a thorn bush and was blinded. After wandering about for a time, he finally came to Rapunzel, whose tears of joy fell upon his eyes and restored their sight. They then set out for the prince's dominion, where they lived happily ever after.

### THE BLUE CLOSET, p. 625

John Drinkwater characterizes this poem with *The Tune of Seven Towers* (p. 626) and *Two Red Roses Across the Moon* (p.628) as "essays in color without any attempt at concrete significance." "It is wrong," he adds, "to say that these poems have no meaning. They mean exactly the colors that they themselves create. It would be as wise to say that a sunset or a blue distance of mountains is meaningless."—*William Morris*, by John Drinkwater, pp. 65-66.

Noyes describes these poems as "vague and somewhat chaotic mediæval scraps of wind-music."—*William Morris*, by Alfred Noyes, p. 21.

### THE LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON, p. 630

Because of its romantic nature, the old Greek legend of the Quest of the Golden Fleece was especially interesting to Morris. He originally planned to use it as a theme of one of the narrative poems of *The Earthly Paradise* (p.632), but his enthusiasm soon outran his first design, and the poem was published separately in 1867 as *The Life and Death of Jason.* It won instant popularity. Following is a brief summary of the story:

Jason was the son of Æson and nephew of Pelias, King of Iolcus, in Thessaly. To keep Jason from his rightful throne, Pelias sent him in quest of the Golden Fleece, which had been taken from the ram that bore Phrixus, about to be sacrificed to Zeus, through the air to Colchis, in Asia. Æetis, King of Colchis, had placed the Fleece in a grove where it was guarded by a sleepless dragon. With the aid of the gods, Jason built an enchanted ship, the *Argo*, and accompanied by fifty of the noblest heroes of Greece—including Castor and Pollux, Orpheus, Hercules, Theseus, and Nestor—set out on the perilous undertaking, and finally arrived at Colchis. The King promised Jason the Fleece if he would harness two fire-breathing, brazen-hoofed bulls to a plow; plow a field sacred to Mars, sow it with dragons' teeth, and kill the crop of armed men that would spring up; and slay the dragon guarding the Fleece. Jason performed all these tasks with the aid of the King's daughter Medea, a powerful sorceress who had fallen in love with him; after the Fleece was secured Jason fled with Medea to the ship and sailed back to Iolcus. With the aid of Medea's wiles, Pelias was slain, and Jason and Medea lived happily in Corinth until Jason fell in love with Glauce, the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth. Medea destroyed her rival with a magic robe of death and fled to Athens. Not long after, Jason fell asleep on the seashore and next morning was found dead.

### THE EARTHLY PARADISE, p. 632

*The Earthly Paradise* is a cycle of twenty-four tales told in verse and bound together, after the manner of Chaucer, by a connecting link that forms the subject of the *Prologue.* In the *Prologue,* Morris tells how certain gentlemen and wanderers, driven from their homes in Norway by the great pestilence that spread over Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, set out to find the fabled Earthly Paradise. After many years they reach a "Western land" inhabited by descendants of the ancient Greeks, who entertain them with semi-monthly feasts for a year. At each feast a tale is told, alternately by one of the inhabitants and by one of the visitors. The inhabitants tell stories of Greek mythology; the visitors, stories of Norse or Romance origin. The prologue, the narrative links connecting the tales, and eight of the tales themselves are written in ten-syllabled couplets; seven tales are in eight-syllabled couplets; the rest, together with the lyrics for the various months, are written in seven-lined stanzas. Following is the Table of Contents of the cycle:

AN APOLOGY
PROLOGUE: The Wanderers
The Author to the Reader
MARCH
  Atalanta's Race
  The Man born to be King
APRIL
  The Doom of King Acrisius
  The Proud King
MAY
  The Story of Cupid and Psyche
  The Writing on the Image
JUNE
  The Love of Alcestis
  The Lady of the Land
JULY
  The Son of Crœsus
  The Watching of the Falcon
AUGUST
  Pygmalion and the Image
  Ogier the Dane
SEPTEMBER
  The Death of Paris
  The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon

October
  The Story of Acontius and Cydippe
  The Man who never laughed again
November
  The Story of Rhodope
  The Lovers of Gudrun
December
  The Golden Apples
  The Fostering of Aslaug
January
  Bellerophon at Argos
  The Ring given to Venus
February
  Bellerophon in Lycia
  The Hill of Venus
Epilogue
L'Envoi

### THE LADY OF THE LAND, p. 633

The following account of *The Lady of the Land* appears in Cap. IV of *The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville:*

> Some Men seyn, that in the Ile of Lango[1] is zit the Doughtre of Ypocras, in forme and lykeness of a gret Dragoun, that is a hundred Fadme of lengthe, as Men seyn: For I have not seen hire. And thei of the Isles callen hire, Lady of the Lond. And sche lyethe in an olde castelle, in a Cave, and schewethe twyes of thryes in the Zeer. And sche dothe none harm to no Man, but zif Men don hire harm. And sche was thus chaunged and transformed, from a fair Damysele, in to lykenesse of a Dragoun, be a Goddesse, that was clept Deane.[2] And Men seyn, that sche schalle so endure in that forme of a Dragoun, unto the tyme that a Knyghte come, that is so hardy, that dar come to hire and kiss hire on the Mouthe: And then schalle sche turne azen to hire owne Kynde, and ben a Woman azen: But aftre that sche schalle not liven longe. And it is not long siththen, that a Knyghte of the Rodes, that was hardy and doughty in Armes, seyde that he wolde kyssen hire. And whan he was upon his Coursere, and wente to the Castelle, and entred into the Cave, the Dragoun lifte up hire Hed azenst him. And whan the Knyghte saw hire in that Forme so hidous and so horrible he fleyghe awey. And the Dragoun bare the Knyghte upon a Roche, mawgre his Hede; and from that Roche, sche caste him in to the See: and so was lost bothe Hors and Man. And also a zonge Man, that wiste not of the Dragoun, wente out of a Schipp, and wente thorghe the Ile, til that he come to the Castelle, and cam in to the Cave; and wente so longe, til that he fond a Chambre, and there he saughe a Damysele, that kembed hire Hede, and lokede in a Myrour; and sche hadde meche Tresoure abouten hire: and he trowed, that sche hadde ben a comoun Woman, that dwelled there to resceyve Men to Folye. And he abode, tille the Damysele saughe the Schadewe of him in the Myrour. And sche turned hire toward him, and asked hym, what he wolde. And he seyde, he wolde ben hire Lemman or Paramour. And sche asked him, zif that he were a Knyghte. And he seyde, nay. And than sche seyde, that he myghte not ben hire Lemman: But sche bad him gon azen unto his Felowes, and make him Knyghte, and come azen upon the Morwe, and sche scholde come out of the Cave before him; and thanne come an kysse hire on the mowthe, and have no Drede; for I schalle do the no maner harm, alle be it that thou see me in Lykenesse of a Dragoun. For thoughe thou see me hidouse and horrible to loken onne, I do the to wytene,[3] that it is made be Enchauntement. For withouten doute, I am non other than thou seest now, a Woman; and therfore drede the noughte. And zif thou kysse me, thou schalt have all this Tresoure, and be my Lord, and Lord also of all that Ile. And he departed fro hire and wente to his Felowes to Shippe, and leet make him Knyghte, and cam azen upon the Morwe, for to kysse this Damysele. And when he saughe hire comen out of the Cave, in forme of a Dragoun, so hidouse and so horrible, he hadde so grete drede, that he fleyghe azen to the Schippe; and sche folewed him. And whan sche saughe, that he turned not azen, sche began to crye, as a thing that hadde meche Sorwe: and thanne sche turned azen, in to hire Cave; and anon the Knyghte dyede. And siththen hidrewards, myghte no Knyghte se hire, but that he dyede anon. But when a Knyghte comethe, that is so hardy to kisse hire, he schalle not dye; but he schall turne the Damysele in to hire righte Forme and kyndely Schapp, and he schal be Lord of alle the Contreyes and Iles aboveseyd.

### THE STORY OF SIGURD THE VOLSUNG, p. 641

*Sigurd the Volsung* is a verse rendering of the prose *Volsunga Saga*, written in Iceland during the twelfth century. Morris had previously translated it in prose. This saga is the oldest form of the Teutonic epic, the story of Siegfried (or Sigurd) and the Niblungs, best known through the *Nibelungenlied* and Wagner's opera cycle, *Die Ring des Nibelungen.*

The general outlines of the Scandinavian and the German forms of the story are the same, but names and details vary. The hero of the Scandinavian version is Sigurd, the son of Sigmund, and the grandson of Volsung, a king of the Huns. Sigmund was slain in battle before the birth of Sigurd, who subsequently became king of the Volsungs. He was reared and trained by Regin, a blacksmith, and, incited by him, Sigurd slew the dragon Fafnir and gained possession of his hoard of gold. After plighting troth to Brynhild, one of the Valkyrie, Sigurd visited the court of the Burgundians, called the Niblungs, and under the spell of a love-potion married Gudrun, daughter of the Niblung king. Then by a stratagem he aided Gudrun's brother Gunnar to secure Brynhild as his wife. In a jealous rage Brynhild persuaded Gudrun's brother Guttorm to kill Sigurd and then she took her own life. Gudrun later married Atli (Attila), king of the Huns, who slew her brothers when they visited him. She soon avenged their death by setting fire to the hall and killing Atli and his children.

Morris tells the story in four books, entitled *Sigmund*, *Regin*, *Brynhild*, and *Gudrun.*

#### *Book I. Sigmund*

*Sigmund* tells of the early days of the Volsungs before the birth of Sigurd, the last of the race. Volsung, king of the Huns, gave his daughter Signy in marriage to Siggeir, king of the Goths. Jealous of the Volsungs, Siggeir invited them to his court, and his band slew all of the visitors except Volsung's son Sigmund, who soon planned vengeance. Assuming the form of another woman Signy went to Sigmund and became the mother of his son Sinfiotli, who later was poisoned by Borghild, Sigmund's first wife. For this deed Borghild was driven from home, and Sigmund then married Hiordis; later he was killed in a battle with the chieftain Lyngi, who also had loved Hiordis. Sigurd was born after the death of Sigmund.

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[1] The Isle of Cos, where Hippocrates (400 B.C.), the famous Greek physician, was born.

[2] Diana, goddess of the moon.

[3] I take thee to witness.

### *Book II—Regin*

Sigurd was reared and trained by Regin, the blacksmith, who told him a story of ancient wrongs and incited him to kill Fafnir the dragon in order to secure a great treasure. Regin stated that upon the death of his brother Otter at the hands of Loki (the Norse god of destruction), Regin's father (Reidmar) demanded as recompense the traditional hoard of gold in the possession of the dwarf Andvari, who lived in the sea in the form of a pike. Loki got the treasure, including a magic ring that had the power to produce gold, but Andvari put a curse upon the ring and the treasure and upon anybody who should possess either. In a quarrel between Regin and his brother Fafnir for possession of the gold, Fafnir got it by killing his father. After inducing Sigurd to slay Fafnir, Regin forged for the exploit a magic sword named the Wrath of Sigurd. Armed with this weapon, Sigurd slew both Fafnir and Regin, seized the golden treasure, and rode away on his horse Greyfell. After a time he came to the Hill of Hindfell, where he found Brynhild the Valkyrie in a trance, placed there by Odin for disobedience and destined to fall in love with a mortal. Together Sigurd and Brynhild plighted their troth, and Sigurd gave her the fated ring of Andvari.

### *Book III—Brynhild*

*Brynhild* tells of the deeds of Sigurd, of his sojourn with the Niblungs, or Burgundians, and of his death. After visiting Brynhild in her palace in the Land of Lymdale, Sigurd came to the Land of the Niblungs and made an alliance with King Giuki; through a magic potion given him by Grimhild, the King's wife, Sigurd forgot Brynhild and wedded Gudrun, the daughter of Giuki and Grimhild. Gunnar, who succeeded his father Giuki as king of the Niblungs, loved Brynhild but could not pass the flames that surrounded her magic house in Lymdale. Thereupon Sigurd took the form of Gunnar and rode on Greyfell through the flames. He plighted troth with Brynhild, but during the night he "laid 'twixt him and the body of Brynhild his bright blue battle-blade." As Sigurd departed the next morning Brynhild placed upon his finger the fated ring of the treasure. Shortly after the marriage of Gunnar and Brynhild, Gudrun and Brynhild engaged in a quarrel, and Gudrun tauntingly revealed the truth of Gunnar's wooing. Overcome with grief and rage, Brynhild listened to the declarations of love by Sigurd, then awakened from the effect of Grimhild's potion, and replied, "I will not wed thee, Sigurd, nor any man alive." At the suggestion of Brynhild, the Niblungs accomplished the death of Sigurd through Guttorm, Gunnar's brother, who had not sworn peace with Sigurd at the time of his arrival. Brynhild took her own life after a last request that she be burned on the funeral pyre of Sigurd. With the death of Sigurd the fated treasure of gold passed into the hands of the Niblung.

### *Book IV—Gudrun*

*Gudrun* tells of the fateful days of the Niblungs after they slew Sigurd and of their destruction by King Atli and his followers. After the death of Sigurd, Gudrun married King Atli from beyond the sea and incited him to gain the ancient treasure as a means of avenging Sigurd. Atli invited the Niblungs to visit him and after they arrived he captured Gunnar and his brother Hogni and killed all their followers. He then killed Hogni and placed Gunnar in a pit with serpents. For a short time Gunnar charmed them with his playing and singing but finally one of them stung him to death. To avenge her brothers, Gudrun killed Atli and burned the hall; then she leaped into the sea.

### A DREAM OF JOHN BALL, p. 650

*A Dream of John Ball* is a prose socialistic romance that contrasts English society when the feudal system was breaking up with that of Morris's own day and faintly suggests what the future may present. The author dreams that he is in the county of Kent, where he meets a group of ardent reformers including John Ball, the "mad priest," who was a leader in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Former experiences are lived through again, and in discussing "the struggle against tyranny for the freedom of life," the two enthusiasts find much in common. The poem in the text was sung early in the story by a young man of the company as a kind of signal for John Ball to appear.

## ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837-1909), p. 654

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) acquired before his majority practically all the knowledge, abilities, ideas, and tendencies which he utilized during the remainder of his life. By his mother, Lady Jane, and his grandfather, Sir John, he was early introduced to the literatures of France and Italy; at Eton he read everything, especially Elizabethan plays, and, in his impetuous way, adored Landor, Shelley, and Corneille, but loathed Euripides and Racine; at Oxford he became a freethinker in religion, an ardent supporter of Italian and French struggles for political liberty, and a source of anxiety to Benjamin Jowett, the benevolent and learned head of his college, because of the irregularities of his life. With his large head and slender, nervous body, he was no less extraordinary in his physical appearance than in the breadth and vigor of his conversation; consequently, when he came to London after leaving Oxford without a degree in 1861, he attracted a circle of friends, including Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the other Pre-Raphaelites. Under Rossetti's wise guidance his lyrical powers greatly expanded; the influence of FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* and of the French poets Hugo and Baudelaire was also important in the development of his poetry. A few of his characteristic lyrics—*Faustine* (1862), *The Triumph of Time* (1866), *Laus Veneris* (1866), *Itylus* (1866)—some in the Pre-Raphaelite manner, were written in 1862-63; and *Atalanta in Calydon*, published in 1865, and hailed by Ruskin as "the grandest thing ever done by a youth—though he is a demoniac youth," made him famous.

This fame was soon changed to notoriety. His dissipations became elaborated in popular rumor; and his *Poems and Ballads*, published in 1866, was denounced by the critics and avidly bought by the public. His picture was displayed in shop-windows, and gossip played havoc with his name. For a time Swinburne appeared eager to live up to his reputation, but the strain on his nervous although wiry constitution brought illness, epileptic attacks, and necessitated long periods of recuperation. His thoughts, too, were directed into new channels by the influence of Mazzini, the Italian liberator, for whom in 1868 Swinburne wrote the *Hymn of Man* and devoted three years to *Songs before Sunrise* (1871). Under the care of such friends as Rossetti, Meredith, and Jowett, his health was sufficient to allow him to engage in spirited controversies with political and literary enemies, to make a series of enthusiastic studies in Elizabethan drama, and to write the lyrics which were issued in 1878 as a second series of *Poems and Ballads*. He was near death in the following year, yet was restored to health and given thirty years more of productivity by the almost paternal care of his friend Theodore Watts-Dunton. To the turmoil of Swinburne's preceding life succeeded a great calm. He lived in ordered routine at Watts-Dunton's suburban home; he walked daily over the same path, pausing to talk with children or to admire babies; because of increasing deafness, he seldom visited the larger world. In spite of the deleterious influence of Watts-Dunton, Swinburne continued to produce some good work and showed his creative vigor and his marvelous lyrical sense through a long list of publications; of this period Tennyson said: "Swinburne is a reed through which all things blow into music." His literary likings he expressed in many appreciative essays. He died of pneumonia in his seventy-first year.

Swinburne's principal publications were: *The Queen Mother and Rosamund*, 1860; *Atalanta in Calydon*, 1865; *Chastelard*, 1865; *Poems and Ballads*, 1866; *Notes on Poems and Reviews*, 1866; *A Song of Italy*, 1867; *William Blake*, 1867; *Songs before Sunrise*, 1871; *Under the Microscope*, 1872; *Bothwell*, 1874; *Essays and Studies*, 1875; *George Chapman*, 1875; *Erechtheus*, 1876; *Poems and Ballads: Second Series*, 1878; *A Study of Shakespeare*, 1880; *Songs of the Springtides*, 1880; *Studies in Song*, 1880; *Mary Stuart*, 1881; *Tristram of Lyonesse, and Other Poems*, 1882; *A Century of Roundels*, 1883; *A Midsummer Holiday, and Other Poems*, 1884; *Marino Faliero*, 1885; *A Study of Victor Hugo*, 1886; *Miscellanies*, 1886; *Locrine*, 1887; *Poems and Ballads: Third Series*, 1889; *A Study of Ben Jonson*, 1889; *The Sisters*, 1892; *Astrophel, and Other Poems*, 1894; *Studies in Prose and Poetry*, 1894; *The Tale of Balen*, 1896; *Rosamund, Queen of the Lombards*, 1899; *A Channel Passage, and Other Poems*, 1904; *The Duke of Gandia*, 1908; *The Age of Shakespeare*, 1908.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"He [Swinburne] broke in on that rather agreeably tedious Victorian tea-party with the effect of some pagan creature, at once impish and divine, leaping on to the sleek lawn, to stamp its goat-feet in challenge, to deride with its screech of laughter the admirable decorum of the conversation. The disorder that followed remains indescribable; and, knowing what we do of the real character of many of the startled company, it is not now quite easy to understand. Few of them were really so tame as they seemed, in that August of 1866, when the summer was so suddenly smitten with strange air, and keen, wild scents and hot, artificial odors of the alcove overwhelmed the temperate perfumes of the insular garden. Even their typical poet, Tennyson, if you considered him closely, when he was off duty, had in him, at any rate as a man, something farouche and acrid, a reminder that, if he now wrote *Enoch Arden* and the like, he had been, not so long ago, in his lucky, unguarded hour, the author of *Maud*. But, for the time being, he was complacent, and rather somnolent, and a trifle official. There was rather too much suavity in the setting he and they had contrived for themselves, too even a gloss on that cultured society. It had genius and talent in abundance, and was concerned with many high matters, of which, however, it now spoke with the emphasis of habit rather than of constantly renewed conviction; but it had become inhospitable to new ideas, suspicious of all instincts which did not bring with them a certificate from some reputable authority. Admirably, it had decided, with the Laureate, to let the ape and tiger die, at any rate as subjects of discussion, but it had fallen into a certain zoölogical confusion, whereby many permanent, if you like deplorable, human characteristics have been assumed to be simian or feline, and it was sure they could be eradicated by a conspiracy of silence."—T. E. Welby, *A Study of Swinburne*, pp. 30-31.

"Swinburne . . . represented, in its most flamboyant shape, revolt against the concessions and the hypocrisies of the Mid-Victorian era. . . . An extraordinary exhilaration accompanied his presence, something uplifted, extravagant, and yet unselfish. No one has ever lived who loved poetry more passionately, found in it more inexhaustible sources of pleasure, cultivated it more thoroughly for itself, more sincerely for nothing which it might be persuaded to offer as a side issue. Half Swinburne's literary influence depended upon little, unregarded matters, such as his unflinching attitude of worship towards the great masters, his devotion to unpopular causes, his uncompromising arrogance in the face of conventionality. It is becoming difficult to recapture even the thrill he caused by his magic use of 'unpoetic' monosyllables, such as 'bleat,' 'pinch,' 'rind,' 'fang,' 'wince,' embedded in the very heart of his ornate melody. But his meteoric flight across the literary heavens, followed by the slow and dignified descent of the glimmering shower of sparks, will long excite curiosity, even when the sensation it caused has ceased to be quite intelligible."—E. Gosse, *Portraits and Sketches*, pp. 57-58.

"The gift of Swinburne is to be capable of passion. Enthusiasm is inseparable from him. Perhaps the simplest aspect of his genius lies in his revolutionary songs . . . his songs for Italy, in the great days of her patriots, the first-fruits of his sympathies with the land and of his personal admiration for Mazzini. He does not state the grounds of his faith, for it is not an intellectual passion that seizes on him; it is a fervor that burns, an exaltation that lifts and heightens, a flood of feeling that pours forth and inundates with light and music and with the confluence of many strengths in one superb moral force—the revolutionary cause. . . . In his own land Swinburne's revolutionary ardor changed and took a new form in an illimitable patriotism, a pride in England, an Elizabethan might of land-love that carried the fate of the Armada in its bosom as its dearest memory and expressed itself in an exuberance of panegyric and delight that makes his verse seem contemporaneous with English liberty and the ocean-rhythm of England's empire."—G. E. Woodberry, *Literary Essays*, pp. 289-90.

"Reading . . . . Swinburne on a high rock around which the sea is washing, one is struck by the way in which these cadences, in their unending, ever-varying flow, seem to harmonize with the rhythm of the sea. . . . The whole essence of Swinburne seems to be made by the rush and soft flowing impetus of the sea. The sea has passed into his blood like a passion, and into his verse like a transfiguring element. It is actually the last word of many of his poems, and it is the first and last word of his poetry."—A. Symons, *Figures of Several Centuries*, p. 161.

## CRITICAL NOTES

### A SONG IN TIME OF ORDER, p. 654

The date of 1852, accompanying the title of this poem, marked the period of domination of tyrannical forces in Europe. It is against such power that the three republicans of the poem are revolting.

The contagion of the French Revolution of Feb., 1848, which established the second French Republic, spread throughout the continent of Europe and greatly heartened organized enemies of monarchy and repression. In Germany the forces of democracy clamored for political independence; in Italy and Hungary sporadic uprisings endeavored to throw off the despotic yoke of Austria. A new republic was proclaimed in Florence in Feb., 1849, and on the same day a popular assembly at Rome deposed the Pope from temporal power and proclaimed the Republic of Rome. By his public condemnation of the war for Italian freedom, and by his refusal to sanction certain liberal acts of legislation, Pope Pius IX had earlier lost favor with the people and had fled to the Neapolitan fortress at Gaeta. France, however, had already begun proceedings which resulted in the reinstatement of the Pope on July 14, 1849, and his return to Rome in 1850.

The so-called "Papal Aggression" stirred England in 1850, when the Pope issued a bull setting up a hierarchy of bishops for England with titles to be derived from English sees created by the bull, rather than as formerly from extinct dioceses in Asia Minor. A statement by Cardinal Wiseman that "Catholic England had been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament from which its light had been long vanished" added fuel to the excitement, which eventuated in the burning of effigies and the passing of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill in 1851, which aimed directly at the provisions of the Papal bull.

In Dec., 1851, Lord Palmerston, foreign secretary in England, outraged public opinion by unofficially approving the notorious *coup d'etat* by which Louis Napoleon, who had been elected president of the French Republic, overthrew the government and a year later proclaimed himself Emperor of the French.

### FAUSTINE, p. 655

Swinburne gives the following explanation of the origin and the meaning of this poem:

"*Faustine* is the reverie of a man gazing on the bitter and vicious loveliness of a face as common and as cheap as the morality of reviewers, and dreaming of past lives in which this fair face may have held a nobler or fitter station; the imperial profile may have been Faustina's, the thirsty lips a Mænad's, when first she learnt to drink blood or wine, to waste the loves and ruin the lives of men; through Greece and again through Rome she may have passed with the same face which now comes before us dishonored and discrowned. Whatever of merit or demerit there may be in the verses, the idea that gives them such life as they have is simple enough; the transmigration of a single soul, doomed as though by accident from the first to all evil and no good, through many ages and forms, but clad always in the same type of fleshly beauty. The chance which suggested to me this poem was one which may happen any day to any man—the sudden sight of a living face which recalled the well-known likeness of another dead for centuries: in this instance, the noble and faultless type of the elder Faustina, as seen in coin and bust. Out of that casual glimpse and sudden recollection these verses sprang and grew."—*Notes on Poems and Reviews*, in Vol. 16 of the *Complete Works*, pp. 364-65.

### ATALANTA IN CALYDON, p. 657

*Atalanta in Calydon* is a drama in which Swinburne attempted, as he said, "to do something original in English which might in some degree reproduce for English readers the likeness of a Greek tragedy with something of its true poetic life and charm." Although the play diverges from the exact formulas of a Greek drama, it nevertheless accomplishes what the author intended.

The theme concerns the story of the famous hunt for the wild boar that in ancient legend devastated the country in Calydon, a province in northwestern Greece. The story is as follows: Œneus, king of Calydon, had offended Artemis, goddess of the moon, by neglecting her in his rituals, and she sought vengeance by inciting war against him and by sending a wild boar that laid waste the country of his people. In the expedition organized to slay the boar was Atalanta, the beautiful Arcadian huntress, daughter of Zeus, and beloved of Artemis. Meleager, a young hero who had taken part in the quest for the Golden Fleece, the son of Œneus and Althaea, fell in love with Atalanta, and when the boar was killed presented her with the spoils of victory. Toxeus and Plexippus, brothers of Queen Althaea, resented this action and in attempting to deprive Atalanta of her prize were both killed by Meleager. At the time of the birth of Meleager, Althaea had been warned by the Fates that he would live only so long as the brand in the fire before her remained unconsumed; in order to protect his life she snatched the brand from the flames and carefully preserved it. When she heard of the tragic death of her brothers, she became angry at her son and plunged the brand into the fire; as it was consumed the life of Meleager wasted away.

The Invocation, calling upon Artemis and Apollo to aid the enterprise of the hunt, is the opening section of the drama.

### LAUS VENERIS, p. 664

*Laus Veneris* is a rehandling, or rather an extension, of the Tannhäuser legend. In the medieval story, the knight, who had been enamored of Venus, went to Rome to secure pardon for his sinful love from Pope Urban; denied his request, he returned to Venus. Swinburne thus explains his purpose:

"Of the poem in which I have attempted once more to embody the legend of Venus and her knight, I need say only that my first aim was to rehandle the old story in a new fashion. To me it seemed that the tragedy began with the knight's return to Venus—began at the point where hitherto it had seemed to leave off. The immortal agony of a man lost after all repentance—cast down from fearful hope into fearless despair—believing in Christ and bound to Venus—desirous of penitential pain, and damned to joyless pleasure—this, in my eyes, was the kernel and nucleus of a myth comparable only to that of the foolish virgins and bearing the same burden. The tragic touch of the story is this: that the knight who has renounced Christ believes in him; the lover who has embraced Venus disbelieves in her. Vainly and in despair would he make the best of that which is the worst—vainly remonstrate with God, and argue on the side he would fain desert. Once accept or admit the least admixture of pagan worship, or of modern thought, and the whole story collapses into froth and smoke."—*Notes on Poems and Reviews*, in Vol. 16 of the *Complete Works*, p. 365.

**Page 667, lines 181 ff.** With these lines compare the following passage from the famous Old French love story of Aucassin and Nicolette. The opposition of the father of Aucassin to his love for the beautiful Saracen captive Nicolette led to her being confined in a high chamber in the castle of the Viscount, her godfather. When told that marriage with Nicolette would lose him Paradise, Aucassin replied: "What have I to do in Paradise? I seek not to enter there; but let me have Nicolette, my most sweet friend whom I love so much. Into Paradise none go except the sort of people I will tell you of. There go those old priests and those lame and crippled ones who all day and all night grovel before altars and in old crypts; and those clothed in old, worn cloaks and in old rags; those who are naked and barefoot and full of sores; those who die of hunger and of thirst and of cold, and of miseries. These go to Paradise; with them have I nothing to do; but into hell I wish to go. For into hell go the goodly clerks and the goodly knights, who have died in the tourneys and in the great wars; and the good soldier and the true man. With these do I wish to go. And there go also the fair, courteous ladies who have two loves or three besides their lords. And there go also the gold and the silver and the rich furs; and there go also the harper and minstrel and the Kings of the world. With these I wish to go, only let me have Nicolette, my most sweet friend, with me."

### IN MEMORY OF WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, p. 681

Swinburne had the faculty of being both a hard hater and a violent lover, which often led him to express extravagant blame or praise with equal facility. Antagonism engendered by the intensity of his attacks and controversies was paralleled by ridicule when he engaged in what he called "the noble pleasure of praising." Hero-worship became with him, as Nicolson says (*Swinburne*, p. 69), "a deep and persistent religion, and the most potent of his incantations was ever 'Let us now praise famous men.'" The exaggerations of his critical utterances correlate with such incidents as his kneeling before the aged Landor when they first met in Italy in 1864, or his carrying a footstool to a dinner given in honor of Browning so that he might sit at Browning's feet.

### DOLORES, p. 682

Swinburne says of this poem:

"I have striven here to express that transient state of spirit through which a man may be supposed to pass, foiled in love and weary of loving, but not yet in sight of rest; seeking refuge in those 'violent delights' which 'have violent ends,' in fierce and frank sensualities which at least profess to be no more than they are. This poem, like *Faustine*, is so distinctly symbolic and fanciful that it cannot justly be amenable to judgment as a study in the school of realism. The spirit, bowed and discolored by suffering and by passion (which are indeed the same thing and the same word), plays for awhile with its pleasures and its pains, mixes and distorts them with a sense half-humorous and half-mournful, exults in bitter and doubtful emotions:

> Moods of fantastic sadness, nothing worth.

It sports with sorrow, and jests against itself; cries out for freedom and confesses the chain; decorates with the name of goddess, crowns anew as the mystical Cotytto, some woman, real or ideal, in whom the pride of life with its companion lusts is incarnate. In her lover's half-shut eyes, her fierce unchaste beauty is transfigured, her cruel sensual eyes have a meaning and a message; there are memories and secrets in the kisses of her lips. She is the darker Venus, fed with burnt-offering and blood-sacrifice; the veiled image of that pleasure which men impelled by satiety and perverted by power have sought through ways as strange as Nero's before and since his time; the daughter of lust and death, and holding of both her parents; Our Lady of Pain, antagonist alike of trivial sins and virtues: no Virgin, and unblessed of men; no mother of the Gods or God; no Cybele, served by sexless priests or monks, adored or Origen or Atys; no likeness of her in Dindymus or Loreto."—*Notes on Poems and Reviews*, in Vol. 16 of the *Complete Works*, pp. 360-61.

Swinburne's poetry lent itself easily to parody, as he himself demonstrated in his own *Nephelidia* (p. 725). One of the most famous parodies is the following poem by Arthur Clement Hilton (1851-77):

### *Octopus*

BY ALGERNON CHARLES SIN-BURN

Strange beauty, eight-limbed and eight-handed,
 Whence camest to dazzle our eyes?
With thy bosom bespangled and banded
 With the hues of the seas and the skies;
Is thy home European or Asian,
 O mystical monster marine?
Part molluscous and partly crustacean,
 Betwixt and between.

Wast thou born to the sound of sea trumpets,
 Hast thou eaten and drunk to excess
Of the sponges—thy muffins and crumpets,
 Of the seaweed—thy mustard and cress?
Wast thou nurtured in caverns of coral,
 Remote from reproof or restraint?
Art thou innocent, art thou immoral,
 Sinburnian or Saint?

Lithe limbs, curling free, as a creeper
 That creeps in a desolate place,
To enroll and envelop the sleeper
 In a silent and stealthy embrace,
Cruel beak craning forward to bite us,
 Our juices to drain and to drink,
Or to whelm us in waves of Cocytus,
 Indelible ink!

O breast, that 'twere rapture to writhe on!
 O arms 'twere delicious to feel
Clinging close with the crush of the Python,
 When she maketh her murderous meal!
In thy eight-fold embraces enfolden,
 Let our empty existence escape;
Give us death that is glorious and golden,
 Crushed all out of shape!

Ah! thy red lips, lascivious and luscious,
 With death in their amorous kiss,
Cling round us, and clasp us, and crush us,
 With bitings of agonized bliss;
We are sick with the poison of pleasure,
 Dispense us the potion of pain;
Ope thy mouth to its uttermost measure
 And bite us again! (1872)

**Page 682, lines 49-52.** These four lines are quoted by Muller, the Forest Officer, in Kipling's story "In the Rukh," first printed in *Many Inventions* (1893) and later included in *The Jungle Book*. To Muller, the *rukh*, or jungle, was older than the gods, and he spent many a long evening smoking and staring into the darkness as he meditated upon his paganism and repeated his favorite quotations. One quiet midnight he was heard to address these words to the *rukh*, delivered with deep feeling:

> "Dough we shivt and bedeck und bedrape us,
>  Dou art noble und nude und andeek;
> Libidina dy moder, Briapus
>  Dy fader, a god und a Greek.

Now I know dot Bagan *or* Christian, I shall nefer know der inwardness of der *rukh*."

**Page 683, lines 67-68.** Of these lines G. K. Chesterton says:

"Swinburne, . . . when he wrote the couplet—

> 'From the lilies and languors of virtue
> To the raptures and roses of vice,'

wrote what is nothing but a bad imitation of himself, an imitation that seems indeed to have the wholly unjust and uncritical object of proving that the Swinburnian melody is a mechanical scheme of initial letters."—*Robert Browning*, p. 142.

## AVE ATQUE VALE, p. 690

The imagery of *Ave Atque Vale* is largely and fittingly drawn from Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* (*The Flowers of Evil*), the following lines of which Swinburne quoted as a kind of motto for his poem:

Nous devrions pourtant lui porter quelques fleurs;
Les morts, les pauvres morts, ont de grandes douleurs,
Et quand Octobre souffle, émondeur des vieux arbres
Son vent mélancolique à l'entour de leurs marbres,
Certe, ils doivent trouver les vivants bien ingrats.

The lines may be translated as follows: "Yet we should bear him some flowers; the dead, the unhappy dead, have great sorrows, and when October, pruner of ancient trees, blows its melancholy wind about their tombs, surely they must deem the living very ingrates."

Swinburne was early attracted to the famous French poet and critic and once spoke of him as "one of the most exquisite, most delicate, and most perfect poets of the century—perfect in sound, in color, in taste of meter, and in tone of emotion." A laudatory review of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, published by Swinburne in 1862, was later retracted as over-praise of Baudelaire's poem.

*Ave Atque Vale* is generally regarded as Swinburne's greatest achievement in elegy, and as one of his noblest poems. Nicolson says of it:

"Swinburne pictures himself as standing under 'the veiled porches of the Muse funereal,' actually beside the bier of the dead poet. This almost physical contact throws over the lines a bitter breath of the macabre, gives to them the chilling throb of awe. For this is no Christian ritual which he is celebrating, but rather some despairing Pagan libation, and the salt courageous savor of Roman pessimism gives to the lines that astringent quality which is the secret of their appropriateness and of their strength."—*Swinburne*, p. 159.

### HYMN OF MAN, p. 699

**Lines 21 ff.** With these lines compare the following passage from *The Birds* of Aristophanes:

"Upon the infinite bosom of Erebus an egg filled with gas was deposited to begin with by black-winged Night. From this in the hour ordained was Love, the longed-for, brought forth. His back was aflash with two wings all golden, that whirled like the breezes. He with winged Chaos mated by night in wide Tartarus and begot our breed and first led them into the light of day. At first there was no race of men until Love mixed all things together."

The same idea is found also in Plato's *Symposium* and in Spenser's *Hymn to Heavenly Love.*

### TO WALT WHITMAN IN AMERICA, p. 704

When this poem was written, Swinburne regarded Whitman as the inspired poet and prophet of Democracy in the New World. A year later he praised Whitman highly in *Under the Microscope*, and elsewhere referred to his *O Captain, My Captain* as "the most sonorous anthem ever chanted in the church of the world." Under the chilling influence of Theodore Watts-Dunton, however, Swinburne later swung to the opposite extreme, and in *Whitmania* (1887), in discussing Whitman's display of physical emotion in poetry, says: "Mr. Whitman's Eve is a drunken apple-woman, indecently sprawling in the slush and garbage of the gutter amid the rotten refuse of her overturned fruit-stall; but Mr. Whitman's Venus is a Hottentot wench under the influence of cantharides and adulterated rum. Cotytto herself would repudiate the ministration of such priestesses as these."—*Complete Works*, Vol. 15, p. 316.

### TRISTRAM OF LYONESSE, p. 707.

The story of Tristram and Iseult had intrigued Swinburne when he was at Eton (1849-53); and during his Oxford period (1856-60) he began a romance, *Queen Yseult*, which was intended to consist of ten cantos, only six of which were written. One canto was published in 1858; the others not until 1918. About 1860 he wrote "Joyeuse Garde," included in *A Lay of Lilies and Other Poems*, printed by Mr. Wise in 1918. After the publication of Tennyson's *Holy Grail* in 1869, Swinburne gave serious attention to the subject and wrote the Prelude to *Tristram of Lyonesse;* this Prelude was published in 1871 with a Dedicatory Epistle in which he said:

"My aim was simply to present that story, not diluted and debased as it had been in our own time by other hands, but undefaced by improvement and undeformed by transformation, as it was known to the age of Dante wherever the chronicles of romance found hearing from Ercildoune[1] to Florence; and not in the epic or romantic form of sustained or continuous narrative, but mainly through a succession of dramatic scenes or pictures with descriptive settings or backgrounds."

Using as his chief source the Middle English version of *Sir Tristram*, Swinburne worked at his poem intermittently until it was finally completed and published in 1882. "In contrast to the ingenuous encyclopedic manner of the medieval story-tellers," says Chew, "he presents a series of salient episodes, the significant moments in the love story, connected by narrative passages. The fundamental purpose is to sustain the theme of the 'Prelude,' which is Love: in the first canto, the dawn of passion; in the second, the fulfillment of love-longing; in the third, the yearning of Iseult for her absent lover; in the fourth, reunion; in the fifth (the marvelous 'Iseult at Tintagel,' which is the climax of the poem), the renewed yearning of Iseult to the choral accompaniment of wind and sea. The sixth canto, like much of the third, is pitched in a lower key. In the seventh a new *motif*—Fate—is introduced, but here also the theme of Love continues, this time the love of Iseult of the Fair Hands, love changed to jealousy and hate. The eighth canto is devoted to the life of Tristram in absence from Iseult of Ireland; and the last to Love-in-Death. Throughout, the interest is thus centered upon the love theme with a directness and exclusiveness equaled only by Wagner."—*Swinburne*, pp. 170-71.

With Swinburne's poem compare Arnold's *Tristram and Iseult*, p. 442.

### THALASSIUS, p. 716

*Thalassius* is one of many poems by Swinburne that reveal his deep affection for the sea, which he constantly regarded as the symbol of Liberty. Swinburne's father was an Admiral in the British Navy and from him the poet inherited his love of the sea which was expressed so poignantly as to win for him the title of "laureate of the sea." In a letter written to E. C. Stedman on Feb. 20, 1875, Swinburne says:

"As for the sea, its salt *must* have been in my blood before I was born. I can remember no earlier enjoyment than being held up naked in my father's arms and brandished between his hands, then shot like a stone from a sling through the air, shouting and laughing with delight, head foremost into the coming wave—which could only have been the pleasure of a very little fellow. I remember being afraid of other things, but never of the sea. But this is enough of infancy; only it shows the *truth* of my endless passionate returns to the sea in all my verse."

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[1] Modern Earlston, Berwickshire, Scotland; traditionally the residence of Thomas the Rhymer, legendary Scottish bard and prophet.

### BY THE NORTH SEA, p. 723

The locality described in *By the North Sea* is Dunwich on the coast of Suffolk. In the Dedicatory Epistle, prefixed to his collected poems, Swinburne writes of "the dreary beauty, inhuman if not unearthly in its desolation, of the innumerable creeks and inlets, lined and paven with seaflowers, which make of the salt marshes a fit and funereal setting, a fatal and appropriate foreground, for the supreme desolation of the relics of Dunwich; the beautiful and awful solitude of a wilderness on which the sea has forbidden man to build or live, overtopped and bounded by the tragic and ghastly solitude of a headland on which the sea has forbidden the works of human charity and piety to survive."

### ADIEUX À MARIE STUART, p. 726

Mary Queen of Scots captured the boyish imagination of Swinburne, and in spite of the liberal and democratic principles of his mature years, he did not modify his early loyalty to the House of Stuart.

This ill-fated queen has been a favorite theme of novelists and poets—Scott, Schiller, Drinkwater, Bjornson, and others—but none has presented her with the completeness, the historical accuracy, the subtlety and the mastery that mark Swinburne's famous trilogy—*Chastelard* (1865), *Bothwell* (1874), and *Mary Stuart* (1881).

Mary Stuart became queen of Scotland upon the death of her father, James V, in 1542, when she was one week old. At the age of 15 she was married to the Dauphin of France, and became queen of that country when he ascended to the throne as Francis II, in 1559. Left a widow in 1561, she returned to Scotland and in 1565 married James Stuart, Lord Darnley. During her absence in France, the Protestant Reformation, for which John Knox and others had long labored, had become established in Scotland, and being a staunch Roman Catholic, she found herself at odds with her Protestant subjects. Angered by her favoritism toward her low-born Italian secretary—David Rizzio—the Scotch lords and her husband conspired in the murder of Rizzio. After the birth of Mary's son (who became James I, of England), Darnley was murdered and Mary was charged with the deed. Three months later she married the Earl of Bothwell, who had been exposed as one of Darnley's assassins. Forced to abdicate in 1568 in favor of her son, she sought protection of her cousin, Queen Elizabeth, who promptly made her a prisoner. For the next nineteen years Mary's name was involved in plots for escape and for the overthrow of Elizabeth. She was finally tried, convicted, and executed in 1587.

Swinburne had only scorn for those persons who saw no wrong in Mary and who defended her "at the expense of her intelligence and her courage." He believed that her crimes were great, and his purpose in writing his plays, he says, was "to vindicate her from the imputation of her vindicators." For a complete statement regarding his attitude, see his *Note on the Character of Mary Queen of Scots*, printed in his volume of prose *Miscellanies*.

### THE LAKE OF GAUBE, p. 734

The following passage from Swinburne's *Notes of Travel—Alps and Pyrenees* (1894) is quoted as a parallel account of the poet's recollections of Lake Gaube:

"Of all great poets that ever lived, with the one possible and doubtful exception of Dante, Victor Hugo is the one who would have seemed most fit to describe and most capable of describing the lake of Gaube; . . . The fiery exuberance of flowers among which the salamanders glide like creeping flames, radiant and vivid, up to the very skirt of the tragic little pine-wood at whose heart the fathomless little lake lies silent, with a dark dull gleam on it as if of half-tarnished steel; the deliciously keen and exquisite shock of a first plunge under its tempting and threatening surface, more icy cold in spring than the sea in winter; the ineffable and breathless purity of the clasping water in which it seems to savor of intrusive and profane daring that a swimmer should take his pleasure till warned back by fear of cramp when but half way across the length of it, and doubtful whether his stock of warmth would hold out for a return from the far edge opposite, to which no favoring magic can be expected to transport the clothes left behind him on the bank off which he dived; the sport of catching and taming a salamander till it became the pleasantest as well as the quaintest of dumb four-footed friends; the beauty of its purple-black coat of scaled armor inlaid with patches of dead-leaf gold, its shining eyes and its flashing tongue—these things, of which a humbler hand could write at greater length than this, would require such a hand as Hugo's to do them any sort of justice."—*Complete Works*, Vol. 13, pp. 320-21.

## EDWARD LEAR (1812-88), p. 735

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Complete Nonsense Book*, ed. by Lady Strachey (Duffield, New York, 1912).

*Nonsense Songs and Stories*, with an introduction by E. Strachey (Warne, London, 1921).

*Nonsense Books* (Roberts, Boston, 1891).

*Nonsense Songs and Laughable Lyrics* (Little, Boston, 1899).

*Nonsense Songs* (Warne, London, 1917).

*Queery Leary Nonsense*, ed. by Lady Strachey, introduction by the Earl of Cromer (Mills, London, 1911).

*The Nonsense A B C* (Macmillan, New York, 1928).

*A Book of Nonsense*, collected by E. Rhys (Dutton, New York, 1928). Contains verses by Carroll and others.

*Edward Lear* (Poems) (Benn, London, 1927).

*Letters*, ed. by Lady Strachey, with an introduction by H. Strachey (Unwin, London, 1907).

*Later Letters*, ed. by Lady Strachey (Duffield, New York, 1911).

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Day, C., Jr.: "The Greatest Love Story in the World," *Yale Review*, July, 1925 (n. s. 14:829-32).

Lear, Edward, "A Leaf from the Journals of a Landscape Painter" (with biographical introduction by F. L.), *Macmillan's Magazine*, April, 1897 (75:410-30).

Lushington, F.: "Memoir of Edward Lear," in Lear's *Illustrations to Tennyson*, *Nonsense Songs and Stories* (Warne, London, 1888).

*Living Age*, "Lear's Letters," Jan. 6, 1912 (272:54-56).

Malcolm, I.: "The Literary Work of Edward Lear," *Cornhill Magazine*, Jan., 1908 (97:25-36). Same article in *Living Age*, Feb. 22, 1908 (256:467-75).

*Quarterly Review*, "Nonsense as a Fine Art," Oct., 1888 (167:335-65).

*Saturday Review*, "Edward Lear," Feb. 4, 1888 (65:130-31).

Selwyn, E. C.: "Later Letters of Edward Lear," *Cornhill Magazine*, March, 1910 (101:389-98).

*Spectator*, "Lear's Nonsense-Books," Sept. 17, 1887 (60:1251-52).

*Spectator*, "The Wisdom of Nonsense," March 26, 1910 (104:497-99). Same article in *Living Age*, Apr. 30, 1910 (265:307-09).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edward Lear (1812-88) traveler, painter, and friend of Tennyson, was gifted with a boisterous sense of humor which overflowed, during his rare idle moments, into his nonsense rimes. Early in his career, a set of his bird-paintings caught the fancy of the Earl of Derby, and led to an invitation to paint the birds and animals on the Earl's estate. While there, Lear amused everyone with his impromptu limericks, especially Edward Stanley, the Earl's grandson, for whom Lear wrote his first *Book of Nonsense* (1846). Taking up landscape painting, Lear traveled in remote regions—Albania, the desert of Sinai, the Nile Valley—in search of subjects, embodying his experiences in his *Illustrated Journal of a Landscape Painter* (1869), and making light of his hardships. He retired at length to a villa at San Remo in Italy, and there occupied himself with a set of two hundred drawings to illustrate the poetry of Tennyson.

Lear's principal publications were: *A Book of Nonsense*, 1846; *The Illustrated Journal of a Landscape Painter*, 1869; *Nonsense Drolleries*, 1889, *The Jumblies and Other Nonsense Verses*, 1900.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The parent of modern nonsense-writers he [Lear] is distinguished from all his followers and imitators by the superior consistency with which he has adhered to his aim—that of amusing his readers by fantastic absurdities, as void of vulgarity or cynicism as they are incapable of being made to harbor any symbolical meaning. . . . He has a genius for coining absurd names and words, which, even when they are suggested by the exigencies of his meter, have a ludicrous appropriateness to the matter in hand. His verse is, with the exception of a certain number of cockney rimes, wonderfully flowing and even melodious—or, as he would say, *meloobious*—while to all these qualifications for his task must finally be added the happy gift of pictorial expression, enabling him to double, nay often to quadruple, the laughable effect of his text by an inexhaustible profusion of the quaintest designs."—*Spectator*, Sept. 17, 1887, p. 1251.

## CHARLES STUART CALVERLEY
## (1831-84), p. 736

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Complete Works*, with a biographical notice by Sir W. J. Sendall (Bell, London, 1910).

*Works*, 4 vols. (Bell, London, 1896-98).

*Verses and Translations* (Bell, London, 1900).

*Verses, Translations, and Fly Leaves* (Bell, London, 1904).

*Literary Remains*, with a memoir by W. J. Sendall (Bell, London, 1886).

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*Athenæum*, "Calverley's *Literary Remains*," Oct. 24, 1885 (2:532-34).

Babington, P. L.: *Browning and Calverley; or Poem and Parody, an Elucidation* (Castle, London, 1925).

Payn, J.: "Calverley," *Some Literary Recollections* (Harper, New York, 1880).

Rogers, C.: "Calverley of Christ's," *Saturday Review of Literature*, Jan. 16, 1926 (2:489-90).

*Saturday Review*, "Calverley's Translations," Dec. 12, 1885 (60:786-87).

*Saturday Review*, "C. S. Calverley," Nov. 7, 1885 (60:615-16). Same article in *Living Age*, Jan. 9, 1886 (168:126-28).

Sendall, W. J.: "Charles Stuart Calverley," *Spectator*, Mar. 1, 1884 (57:279-80). Same article in *Living Age*, Apr. 12, 1884 (161:124-26).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Charles Stuart Calverley (1831-84), the son of a Worcestershire clergyman, was celebrated during his undergraduate days at Cambridge for his cleverness, his laziness, and his charm. That he succeeded at Cambridge was due to the efforts of his loyal friends, who dragged him from his bed before the morning was over and locked him in his room with his books. But once aroused, Calverley's mind worked with great brilliance; he won many prizes and medals for his facility in the classics, and great social popularity with the grace of his conversation and the aptness of his impromptu parodies and rimes. On leaving Oxford, he began the practice of law on the Northern Circuit. The success of his professional career, in which his social talents well supplemented his imperfect knowledge of the law, was cut short by an unfortunate accident: he fell on his head while skating in the winter of 1866-67, and was never afterwards able to work or read, although he could still compose an occasional set of verses. He lingered on, suffering from pain and depression, until 1884.

Calverley's publications were: *Verses and Translations*, 1862; *Translations into English and Latin*, 1866; *Theocritus Translated into English Verse*, 1869; *Fly Leaves*, 1872.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Calverley had . . . the trained sense of form and finish; the dexterity which flings the verse into just the right form for suggesting and aiding the airy effect of the humor, which fledges and tips the line to carry the point of wit like an arrow-shaft; the felicitous turn which brings diction and meter pat on the quick of the jest, and tickles you into instant laughter. Of these qualities all feel the effect, but only a student of technique will realize the cunning art of them. . . . Mastery—mastery of form and technique—is the thing which obviously differentiates him from most before him and many after him. . . . Calverley is surely the first of parodists. He may almost be called the founder of a new dynasty in parody. To an extent not previously approached, his parodies are likewise criticisms, and very keen criticisms, of a poet's weaker side. One grudges to call them parodies, so close and refined is the imitation, so inclusively does he catch and reflect all the elements of a writer's style."—*The Spectator*, July 14, 1901, pp. 28-29.

## CHARLES LUTWIDGE DODGSON ("Lewis Carroll") (1832-98), p. 738

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Collected Verse*, with an introduction by J. F. McDermott, and a bibliography (Dutton, New York, 1929).

*Songs from "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass"*; Music by Lucy E. Broadwood (Black, London, 1921).

*Further Nonsense Verse and Prose* (Appleton, New York, 1926).

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Through the Looking Glass, The Hunting of the Snark*, with illustrations by John Tenniel (Boni, New York, 1925).

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*, with 92 illustrations by John Tenniel (Macmillan, New York, 1923).

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* with 42 illustrations by John Tenniel (Macmillan, New York, 1929).

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, illustrated by Arthur Rackham, with a proem by Austin Dobson, (Doubleday, New York, 1907).

*The Hunting of the Snark* (Macmillan, New York, 1929).

*Through the Looking Glass*, illustrated by Gertrude A. Kay, and with the 50 original drawings by John Tenniel (Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1929).

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Siegrist, M.: "The Man That Was Two Men," *Mentor*, Dec., 1928 (16:19-22).

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Charles Lutwidge Dodgson (1832-98) lived, to a certain extent, a dual life; he was known under his own name as a suggestive if somewhat unreliable writer on mathematical problems, and under the name of Lewis Carroll as the author of whimsical nonsense stories and rimes. Shy, stammering, fastidious, eccentric, he lived a solitary life at Oxford, where he held a post as mathematical lecturer and made few friends among his colleagues. Among children, however, he was thoroughly at home. It was his habit to seek the acquaintance, by means of proper introductions to the parents, of every attractive child whom he met; and, after separation, to keep up the friendship with his charming letters. One such little friend, the dainty Alice Liddell, was his favorite; he took her one day for a boat ride on the river

Isis near Oxford and told for her entertainment an imaginative story of her own adventures in a marvelous subterranean world—the story that he expanded into *Alice in Wonderland* (1865). *Alice* made Lewis Carroll famous; Dodgson, who dreaded fame, spent the rest of his life in keeping his identity a doubtful secret, writing in addition to a sequel to *Alice*, other contributions to nursery literature, his letters to his vicarious children, and mathematical works that scholars could not be persuaded to read as seriously as they deserved.

Dodgson's principal publications were: *Syllabus of Plane Algebraical Geometry,* 1869; *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 1865; *An Elementary Treatise on Determinants*, 1867; *Through the Looking Glass*, 1871; *Phantasmagoria and Other Poems,* 1876; *The Hunting of the Snark*, 1876; *Euclid and His Modern Rivals*, 1879; *The Principles of Parliamentary Representation*, 1884; *A Tangled Tale*, 1885; *Silvie and Bruno*, 1889-93; *Curiosa Mathematica*, 1888-93; *Symbolic Logic*, 1896.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"In the kingdom of inspired nonsense there is none greater than Lewis Carroll. His nonsense is like no other man's. It is not ironic and cynical and elaborated like Mr. Gilbert's, nor is it of grotesque, madcap drollery all compact like Edward Lear's. The strange humor never runs riot. It startles and bewilders and delights; it has a flavor to be tasted nowhere else, and that never grows insipid on the palate; yet it is hardly the humor that bubbles and sparkles and evokes irresistible laughter. Lewis Carroll has not Lear's high spirits. Amid his wildest whimsicalities, his most preposterous inversions of fact and reason, he preserves a singular restraint in his manner. He exhibits a sedateness in absurdity, a precision in inconsequence, which give an exquisite incongruity, a delightful piquancy to the writing. . . . The writer's style is worthy of his humor. Never has nonsense been more neatly turned in prose or rime, more indelibly sealed with the seal of literature."—W. Whyte, *The Poets and the Poetry of the Century* (ed. by A. H. Miles), Vol. 9, pp. 443-44.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### FATHER WILLIAM, p. 738

*Father William* is a parody on the following poem by Robert Southey:

*The Old Man's Comforts*

And How He Gained Them

"You are old, Father William," the young man cried,
"The few locks which are left you are gray;
You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man,
Now tell me the reason, I pray."

"In the days of my youth," Father William replied,
"I remembered that youth would fly fast,
And abused not my health, and my vigor at first,
That I never might need them at last."

"You are old, Father William," the young man cried,
"And pleasures with youth pass away;
And yet you lament not the days that are gone,
Now tell me the reason, I pray."

"In the days of my youth," Father William replied,
"I remembered that youth could not last;
I thought of the future, whatever I did,
That I never might grieve for the past."

"You are old, Father William," the young man cried,
"And life must be hastening away;
You are cheerful, and love to converse upon death,
Now tell me the reason, I pray."

"I am cheerful, young man," Father William replied,
"Let the cause thy attention engage;
In the days of my youth I remembered my God!
And He hath not forgotten my age." (*1799;* 1799)

## WILLIAM SCHWENK GILBERT
## (1836-1911), p. 741

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Bab Ballads and Songs of a Savoyard* (Macmillan, London, 1924).
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*More "Bab" Ballads* (Macmillan, London, 1925).
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*H. M. S. Pinafore, and Other Plays*, with an introduction by G. Gabriel (Modern Library, New York, 1925).
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*The Mikado and Other Plays* (Boni, New York, 1917).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sir William Schwenk Gilbert (1836-1911) was born in London and was educated at London University. As an officer in the Gordon Highlanders, a clerk in a government office, and a practicing barrister in London, he found material for later satires on the army, the civil service, and the law; he also prepared for life-work by contributing verses to his college magazine and by training himself in the art of drawing. In 1861 he began writing for the humorous journal *Fun*, to which, in 1867, he contributed his first illustrated ballad, "General John"; his verse and drawing became a weekly feature and bore out his theory that "all humor is based upon a grave and quasi-respectful treatment of the ludicrous." These *Bab Ballads*, so called from Gilbert's childhood nickname, were issued as volumes in 1869 and 1873. Connected from 1863 with the stage as dramatic critic and the friend of actors, Gilbert wrote in 1866 his first play, a Christmas piece called *Dulcamara, or the Little Duck and the Great Quack*. Other travesty successes followed with equally fascinating sub-titles; among them was *The Princess* (1870), a parody of Tennyson's poem, which he later expanded into his opera, *Princess Ida* (1884). In 1870 he began more serious comedies and dramas, the mingled humor and sentiment of which caught the public taste. Gilbert's most conspicuous successes, however, came with the light operas written for the music provided by Sir Arthur Sullivan, already a noted composer when Gilbert met him in 1871. The first of the series, *Trial by Jury*, expanded from a "Bab Ballad" which had appeared much earlier in *Fun*, was produced in 1875. *The Sorcerer* (1877), *H. M. S. Pinafore* (1878), and *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879) quickly followed; English and American audiences went wild with enthusiasm; the Savoy Opera House was built in London expressly for Gilbert and Sullivan productions. *The Mikado*, produced in 1885, ran two years in London and brought Gilbert thirty thousand pounds. The partnership with Sullivan continued until 1896. In his later years Gilbert lived as a genial country gentleman, kept bees, raised vegetables, and served as Justice of the Peace. He was knighted in 1907.

Gilbert's principal publications and stage productions were: *Bab Ballads*, 1869; *The Princess*, 1870; *Pygmalion and Galatea*, 1871; *More Bab Ballads*, 1873; *Charity*, 1874; *Trial by Jury*, 1875; *The Sorcerer*, 1877; *H. M. S. Pinafore*, 1878; *The Pirates of Penzance*, 1879; *Patience*, 1881; *Iolanthe*, 1882; *Princess Ida*, 1884; *The Mikado*, 1885; *Ruddigore*, 1887; *The Yeoman of the Guard*, 1888; *The Gondoliers*, 1889; *Songs of a Savoyard* (lyrics from the operas), 1890; *Foggerty's Fairy and Other Tales*, 1890; *Utopia Limited*, 1893; *The Grand Duke*, 1896; *The Hooligan*, 1911.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Gilbert . . . was a born ironist. From beginning to end *The Bab Ballads* are irony set to a popular tune. Few Englishmen have sustained this dangerous method of satire on a higher level and with fewer lapses into serious instruction . . . . In the operas, Gilbert invented a world of his own, a world of satire and paradox, in which the ordinary standards of morals and experience are reversed. Thus he laughed at all the pompous institutions of the country. . . . In one quality Gilbert differed profoundly from all his rivals: he was a poet. . . . For variety of effect and courage in metrical experiment he is undefeated in his own craft of opera. The lyrics . . . have the true singing quality. Though they may be read with pleasure, yet they are meant to be sung, and Gilbert, juggler with words as he was, has made them fit for musical expression. . . . He was more genuinely inspired with the comic spirit than anyone else of his time, and in the years to come his comedies and operas will interpret the Victorian Age to grave historians."—*Blackwood's Magazine*, July, 1911, pp. 121 ff.

## ARTHUR WILLIAM EDGAR O'SHAUGHNESSY (1844-81), p. 749

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Poems*, selected and edited by W. A. Percy (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1923).
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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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Gosse, E.: "Arthur O'Shaughnessy," *Silhouettes* (Heinemann, London, 1925).
Hamilton, Walter: "Arthur W. E. O'Shaughnessy," *The Æsthetic Movement in England* (Reeves, London, 1882).
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Moulton, Louise C.: *Arthur O'Shaughnessy, His Life and His Work, with Selections from His Poems* (Stone, Chicago, 1894).
Porter, A.: "Arthur O'Shaughnessy," *Spectator*, Aug. 11, 1923 (131:196-97).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy (1844-81), whose dreamy temperament made romantic poetry his natural expression, was from 1861 until his premature death an assistant, like Gosse and Patmore, in the British Museum, and was forced to study means of preserving fishes rather than the old French literature that he loved. Unsuspected by his associates, to whom he was an aloof figure with bushy whiskers and a frock coat, he practiced his poetic art, and surprised them in 1870 with his limpid *Epic of Women and Other Poems* which won him Swinburne's praise and Rossetti's friendship. Not unlike Rossetti in his tastes, he married in 1873 a lady whose beauty had the Pre-Raphaelite quality. As he found more leisure, established closer contacts with the literary circles of France and England, and published subsequent volumes of verse, his life seemed to promise much; but the death of his wife in 1879 was a great blow, and two years later a chill caught in leaving a theater caused his death.

O'Shaughnessy's principal publications were: *Epic of Women and Other Poems*, 1870; *Lays of France*, 1871; *Music and Moonlight*, 1874; *Toyland* (with Mrs. O'Shaughnessy), 1875; *Songs of a Worker*, 1881.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"If we take his [O'Shaughnessy's] poetry at its best and analyze what distinguishes it from the work of other poets, we are struck by its lyrical art—soft, tremulous, and rich; this poet has the voice of the blackbird, not that of the nightingale or the lark. It is a flute-music, not strong in quality, nor wide in range, but of a piercing tenderness. There is never any searching after strange epithets or violent phrases, but the stream of melody flows on without effort and without interruption to its appointed close."—E. Gosse, *Silhouettes*, p. 178.

## THOMAS EDWARD BROWN (1830-97), p. 752

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Collected Poems* (Macmillan, London, 1900).
*Poems* (Macmillan, London, 1922).
*Poems*, selected and arranged, with an introduction and notes by H. F. B. and H. G. D. (Macmillan, London, 1908).
*Letters*, 2 vols., ed., with an introductory memoir, by S. T. Irwin, (Dutton, New York, 1900).

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

*Academy*, "T. E. Brown," Nov. 6, Nov. 13, 1897 (52:377-78, 402).
*Blackwood's Magazine*, "A Poet and Letter-Writer," Nov., 1900 (168:765-67).
Boas, F. S.: "Brown's House," *Literature*, Nov. 17, 1900 (7:283-85).
Canton, W.: "Thomas Edward Brown," *Good Words*, March, 1898 (39:187-93).
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*Quarterly Review*, "The Poems of Thomas Edward Brown," Apr., 1898 (187:384-99). Same article in *Living Age*, Sept. 10, 1898 (218: 707-17).

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Strachan, L. R. M.: "The Poet of Manxland," *Englische Studien*, Dec., 1904 (34:350-62).

Tarver, J. C.: "Thomas Edward Brown," *Macmillan's Magazine*, Oct., 1900 (82:401-10).

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas Edward Brown (1830-97), the son of the scholarly vicar of Kirk Braddan, was born on the Isle of Man at a time when the distinctive customs of the island were gradually disappearing; he early dedicated himself to the preservation, in his poems and letters, of the older Manx life. In 1849 he entered Oxford, where he made a brilliant record; ordained as clergyman, he returned in 1858 to serve as vice-principal of King William's College on the island; he left in 1861 to be head-master of the Crypt School at Gloucester, and began in 1864 a thirty-year term as head of the newly-founded Clifton College near Bristol. Although his work thus lay largely at a distance from his native locality, he returned during vacation periods to renew his friendship with the fishermen and sailors of the Manx harbors, and began in 1873 a series of Manx tales in verse, much admired by George Eliot and Browning. Rugged and somewhat cynical to casual view, Brown had the most gentle of hearts, and was able as teacher to win unusual affection and respect from the boys under his charge. The most conspicuous example of his influence is the effect which his teaching at the Crypt School had on W. E. Henley, who said: "What he did for me was to suggest such possibilities in life and character as I had never dreamed."

Brown's principal publications were: *Fo'c'sle Yarns*, 1881; *The Doctor and Other Poems*, 1887; *The Manx Witch and Other Poems*, 1889; *Old John*, 1893; *Letters* (ed. Irwin), 1900.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"A strong personality impresses itself strongly on the work it does; and the characteristics of Brown's verse are clear, peculiar, and salient. Foremost among them is an extraordinary power of presentation, of character and incident alike. Two other qualities are almost equally apparent. The first is the immense capacity for feeling revealed in both the poet's treatment of nature and his analysis of human emotion. . . . Brown was utterly free from the morbid, pessimistic introspectiveness of so many of our moderns. There is nothing 'fin-de-siècle'[1] about his poetry. He loved flowers—not fungi. . . . Take, next, his extraordinary force of expression. . . . Here is an admirable raciness, a notable pungency, a peculiar, irresistible flavor. . . . Humorous often, often serious, these strong utterances burst into sight like shooting stars, and bring trails of glory. . . . They recall the flavor so often found in Biblical allusions: allusions quaint and homely, as becomes a sort of simple folk, whose faith, not unmixed with superstition, has felt no shock of doubt, and who have been brought up on the Bible all their lives."—W. E. Henley, *New Review*, Dec. 1897, pp. 633 ff.

## JOHN LEICESTER WARREN, LORD DE TABLEY (1835-95), p. 756

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Poems Dramatic and Lyrical*, Two Series (Mathews, London, 1893-95).

*Collected Poems* (Macmillan, London, 1903).

*Select Poems*, ed. by John Drinkwater (Milford, London, 1924).

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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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Le Gallienne, R.: "The Poetry of Lord de Tabley," *Nineteenth Century*, May, 1893 (33:899-904).

Monkhouse, C.: "Lord de Tabley's *Poems Dramatic and Lyrical*," *Academy*, April 6, 1895 (47:291-92).

*Quarterly Review*, "Lord de Tabley," Jan., 1900 (191:246-64).

Tinker, C. B.: "A Poet, the Bramble, and Reconstruction," *Atlantic Monthly*, Nov., 1919 (124:670-73).

Watts-Dunton, T.: "Lord de Tabley," *Athenæum*, Nov. 30, 1895 (pp. 754-56).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Byrne Leicester Warren, third Baron de Tabley (1835-95), suffered during his strangely solitary life from a deep melancholy and hopeless pessimism, which was not due to a lack of devoted friends nor to an absence of congenial work and hobbies. He collected and studied the coins of ancient civilizations; he made himself an authority on bookplates and Greek history; he was an enthusiastic botanist, read the classics with keen pleasure, managed a large estate, and interested himself in politics. Yet he found little permanent satisfaction in any of these pursuits. The death of a close friend by an accident in 1859 encouraged morbid brooding, and the cool reception of his literary work was a factor in the growth of his misanthropy. Gentle and considerate of others, yet sensitive to an unusually high degree, he was cruelly hurt when his *Soldier's Fortune* failed to sell a single copy in 1876; he avoided his friends, who were sincerely attached to him, and lived alone in the midst of London. When, however, a selection from the best of his poetry was published in 1893, he experienced for the first time the pleasures of public acclaim, and would perhaps have found life more congenial had not his health given way in 1895.

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[1] Modern, up-to-date.

De Tabley's principal publications were: *Poems* (with George Fortescue), 1858; *Ballads and Metrical Sketches*, 1860; *The Threshold of Atrides*, 1861; *Glimpses of Antiquity*, 1862; *Prœterita*, 1863; *Eclogues and Monodramas*, 1864; *Studies in Verse*, 1865; *Philoctetes*, 1866; *Orestes*, 1868; *Rehearsals*, 1870; *Searching the Net*, 1873; *The Soldier's Fortune*, 1876; *Flora of Cheshire*, 1899.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Lord de Tabley's heart, at least his literary heart, is not in the century in which he lives. There he finds little to sing about except disappointment, the falseness of love, the uncertainty of fate; only in the beauty of nature does the present day seem to afford pleasure or solace to his muse. From the 'rabble din' of the present his spirit flies for rest to that 'rich tract' of classical literature where he can still hear the flute of Pan—see heroes 'stride mist-like through the Asphodel.' . . . In the crowd of the young poets of the day there are many who can excel Lord de Tabley in the nimbler dexterities of versification; but he may well be content, for he is one of the very few who still can build the lofty line."—C. Monkhouse, *Academy*, Apr. 6, 1895, pp. 291-92.

### CRITICAL NOTES

#### PHILOCTETES, p. 756

*Philoctetes*, like Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* and Arnold's *Merope*, is a choral drama that retells a Greek myth. The story was common in Greek literature and art; it was the subject of dramas by Æschylus and Euripides, both lost, and of two by Sophocles, one of which is extant. The hero, Philoctetes, on his way to fight with the Greek hosts against Troy, had contracted from a serpent's bite an ugly wound and had been cruelly abandoned by his comrades on the desert island of Lemnos. He had in his possession the bow and arrows of Hercules, his former companion. After some years it was disclosed to the Greeks that only by means of these weapons could they conquer Troy; they sent, therefore, Ulysses and Pyrrhus to persuade Philoctetes to give them up. At first the hero was indignant in his refusal, but Hercules came in a vision to convince him that he should bow to divine will. De Tabley treats the legend freely; he expands greatly the initial scene in which Philoctetes voices his resentment against Zeus and his fellow gods, who, unlike the elder gods, seemingly delight in seeing men tortured. The chorus in the text is the culmination of this scene, just before the arrival of the Greek ambassadors.

## HENRY AUSTIN DOBSON
## (1840-1921), p. 759

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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*Collected Poems*, 2 vols. (Dodd, New York, 1895).
*Collected Poems* (Paul, London, 1913).
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*Austin Dobson* (Poems) (Benn, London, 1926).
*De Libris, Prose and Verse* (Macmillan, New York 1908).
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*Eighteenth Century Essays*, Second Series (Chatto, London, 1907).
*Eighteenth Century Studies* (Dent, London, 1914).
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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Henry Austin Dobson (1840-1921) had the latter part of his elementary education in Strasbourg, then a French city, and was thus brought into direct contact with the literature that he always so much esteemed. Returning to England at the age of sixteen, he began work as a clerk in the Board of Trade, where Edmund Gosse was also employed; this post he held for almost fifty years, but always regarded it as a necessary means to a livelihood rather than his true profession. This profession was increasingly that of a man of letters. As a scholar, he was interested primarily in the eighteenth century, wrote biographies of its principal figures, edited some fifty of its masterpieces, and composed a series of charming studies of its manners and literature. As a poet, he was impressed originally by the style of the Pre-Raphaelites; but, under the influence of Théodore de Banville, whose "Little Treatise" on the older French lyrics attracted his attention in 1875, and of Tennyson, who in 1877 recommended the study of Horace's *Odes*, he developed a style as polished and graceful as the minuets of the century that he most admired. He said that "Pope taught him rhythm, Prior ease, Praed buoyancy and banter." Until 1884 his work was largely in verse, thereafter in prose. A shy, nervous man, fastidious and even prudish in his tastes, continually concerned lest his devotion to literature should offend his business superiors, he welcomed his retirement in 1901 as a relief from drudgery, lived aloof from the turmoil of London in a congenial, scholarly world, loved old books, old friends, old wine.

Dobson's principal publications were: *Vignettes in Rhyme*, 1873; *The Civil Service Handbook of English Literature*, 1874; *Proverbs in Porcelain*, 1877; *William Hogarth*, 1879; *Fielding*, 1883; *Old World Idylls*, 1883; *At the Sign of the Lyre*, 1885; *Richard Steele*, 1886; *Oliver Goldsmith*, 1888; *Four Frenchwomen*, 1890; *Horace Walpole*, 1890; *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, 1892, 1894, 1896; *The Ballad of Beau Brocade*, 1892; *The Story of Rosina*, 1895; *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1895; *Miscellanies*, 1898, 1901; *A Palladin of Philanthropy*, 1899; *Carmina Votiva*, 1901; *Side-Walk Studies*, 1902; *Samuel Richardson*, 1902; *Fanny Burney*, 1903; *De Libris*, 1908; *Old Kensington Palace*, 1910; *At Prior Park*, 1912; *Poems on the War*, 1915; *Rosalba's Journal*, 1915; *A Bookman's Budget*, 1917; *Later Essays*, 1921.

## INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Austin Dobson's style both in prose and verse was ever beautifully clear, urbane, and prudent. . . . He was an excellent craftsman and contriver. His verses are often as bright, smooth, and caressable as precious snuff-boxes, and like them they sometimes contain a little pungent dust which can bring water to the eyes. . . . In knowledge of the social and literary life of the eighteenth century he was without a rival, unless that rival might be Dr. Birbeck Hill; and he knew that saner society and the famous characters who composed it as if he had been, not our, but their contemporary. . . . His standards of good sense and good taste were those of his favorite period, tempered by an exceptional kindliness, and every book he published was a fastidious model of light learning. He never wooed the Muse of introspection or her of the woeful countenance. His own was a Dresden shepherdess, yet in one respect she was not of the eighteenth century; for there was no malice or license in her. She was demure and she wore, I think, a little flowered bonnet."—A. C. Squire, *New Statesman*, Sept. 10, 1921, p. 623.

See Henley's *To A. D.*, p. 785; also Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's *In a Volume of Austin Dobson*, p. 859.

## CRITICAL NOTES

### A DIALOGUE, p. 767

This poem is full of allusions to the life and writings of Pope and to his contemporaries. The Friend of line 2, eager to exhibit the darker side of Pope (called "the Twitnam Bard" because of his retirement, after 1719, to his villa at Twickenham, up the Thames from London), reviews the acrimony with which Pope attacked his contemporaries (such as the critic, John Dennis; the playwright and actor, Colley Cibber; and the Shakespearean editor, Lewis Theobald) in the *Dunciad* (1728-43) and other personal satires; the fickleness that led him to profess an exalted friendship for the brilliant Lady Mary Wortley Montagu from 1717 to 1723 and then to attack her bitterly for the rest of his life; and the sorry figure which he cut in a scandalous pamphlet, *A Pop upon Pope*, 1728, that recounted how he was soundly whipped by his victims as he strolled in Ham Walks near Twickenham. The Poet defends Pope.

The explanations necessary for the understanding of this poem and *A Postscript to "Retaliation"* are so numerous that they could not easily be included in the footnotes and are grouped here instead.

**Page 767.** 11. *Grub Street*, the hack-writers who inhabited garrets in Grub Street, now Milton Street, in London.

17. *"long Disease."* See Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, 131-32:

> "The Muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,
> To help me through this long disease, my life."

An illness in childhood left Pope deformed, seldom without pain, for the rest of his life.

23. *"crooked . . . Mind!"* "Mens curva in corpore curvo"; said of Pope by Lord Orrery (Dobson's note).

33-34. *Swift . . . Arbuthnot*, authors and noblemen of the Tory party, with whom Pope was closely associated. Jonathan Swift and Dr. John Arbuthnot joined with Pope in the Scriblerus Club to ridicule false tastes in learning. Henry St. John (pronounced Sinjun), Viscount Bolingbroke, was until 1714 a leader of the Tory party and thereafter a writer on history and politics. Allen, Earl of Bathurst; Patrick Hume, Earl of Marchmont; and Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough, were other literary noblemen who were frequent visitors at Twickenham.

34. *Atticus*, Joseph Addison (1672-1719), famous essayist, whom Pope attacked in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, lines 193-214, under the name of Atticus.

37. *So . . . thought.* Many of Hamlet's speeches are veiled or equivocal. Cf. the one to Guildenstern.—"I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw" (II, 2, 396-98).

40. *Lock . . . Eloise*, works of Pope: *The Rape of the Lock*, 1712-14, a mock-epic social satire; the *Satires*, 1733-38, including *The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, Pope's masterpiece in personal invective; *Eloisa to Abelard*, c.1717, a Neo-Classic version of the romantic passion between the nun Héloise and the philosopher Abelard in the 12th century.

46. *"True . . . dressed."* From Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, line 97.

48. *"And . . . Line."* From *ibid.*, line 147. The sound of Pope's line is here, as he said, "an echo to the sense."

51. *"Ten . . . amiss."* From *ibid.*, line 6.

55. *Byron . . . Bowles.* William Lisle Bowles, who wrote sonnets (1789) admired by Wordsworth and Coleridge, later engaged in a controversy with Lord Byron in which Bowles questioned the poetic merits of Pope and defined poetry in accordance with the new romantic principles.

**Page 768.** 57. *Nahum Tate*, a mediocre poet (1652-1715), who collaborated with Dryden in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* and who succeeded him, after an interval, as poet laureate.

61. *Horace . . . Juvenal*, the three principal satirists in Roman literature. Horace's satire on Augustan Rome is urbane; the satires of Persius and Juvenal on the Rome of Nero and of Domitian are violent.

64-69. *When . . . File*, an accurate characterization of the prevailing mood and spirit of the writing of Pope's day.

80. *Iliad*, Pope's translation (1715-20) of Homer's epic, not close to the letter or spirit of the original, but superbly adapted to the taste of the 18th century.

81. *Bohn*, the publisher of *Bohn's Classical Library* in which a literal prose translation of Homer, by T. A. Buckley, was included.

83. *Butcher . . . Lang*, *The Odyssey of Homer Done into English Prose* by S. H. Butcher and Andrew Lang, 1887.

100. *Bathos*, a descent from the sublime to the ridiculous; see *On Bathos: or, Of the Art of Sinking in Poetry* (*Works of Alexander Pope*, 1751, Vol. 6, pp. 195 ff.). *Trope*, a word used figuratively rather than precisely; Chapter 10 of *On Bathos* concerns Tropes and Figures.

### A POSTSCRIPT TO "RETALIATION," p. 768

The references that follow are to Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, 6 vols., ed. by G. B. Hill (Macmillan, London, 1887).

**Page 768.** 11-12. *rough . . . kind.* Goldsmith's characterization—"Johnson, to be sure, has a roughness in his manner; but no man alive has a more tender heart. He was nothing of the bear but his skin." Line 20.—Vol. 2, p. 66.

14. *When . . . butt-end.* "There is no arguing with Johnson," said Goldsmith, "for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt-end of it."—Vol. 2, p. 100.

**Page 769.** 17. *tossed . . . you.* Boswell's phrase.—Vol. 2, p. 66.

21. *anfractuosity*, complexity of mind—a Johnsonian word; quoted by Boswell, Vol. 4, p. 4.

24. *hated . . . Beauty.* Johnson was an ardent Tory and regarded a Whig as a member of a faction opposed to the ancient constitution of the state. "The first Whig," he said, "was the Devil" (Vol. 3, p. 326). Boswell records numerous

instances of Johnson's admiration of the charms of women. "If I had no duties," Johnson said, "and no reference to futurity, I would spend my life in driving briskly in a postchaise with a pretty woman."—Vol. 3, p. 162.

26. *he . . . whales.* When Johnson laughed at Goldsmith's intention to write a fable in which fishes should talk like fishes, Goldsmith said, "If you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales."—Vol. 2, p. 231.

## WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT
## (1840-1922), p. 770

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt (1840-1922), an impulsive and generous advocate of unpopular causes, was the son of an officer who had distinguished himself in the Napoleonic Wars. Educated in the best Roman Catholic schools, he entered the diplomatic service in 1858, and served at Athens, Madrid, Paris, Lisbon, and in South America; because of his handsome presence and romantic bearing, his career was socially brilliant but not wholly satisfactory to his more sedate superiors. He married in 1869 the beautiful granddaughter of Lord Byron, the Lady Anne Noel, left the diplomatic service, and in 1872 succeeded to the family estate of Corabbet Park in Sussex. There he bred and rode Arab horses and wrote his half-dramatic, half-personal *Love Sonnets of Proteus* (1880) with their frank allusions to his escapades before marriage. Tired of country diversions, he embarked with Lady Anne upon a long series of travels and adventures in Africa, India, and the Near-East; became an ardent sympathizer with native viewpoints and an opponent of the British imperialistic policy in India, Egypt, and the Soudan; and wrote, in his *Future of Islam* (1882), *The Wind and the Whirlwind* (1883), and *Ideas about India* (1885), dire predictions, since partly realized, of native revolts. Returning home for a period in 1885-87, he espoused, with his customary fervor, the nationalist cause in Ireland, ran unsuccessfully for parliament as an advocate of Home Rule, and, for fiery speeches, was arrested and imprisoned two months in Irish jails. Shortly before his death, he published his *Diaries* (1920), in which he repeated his aversion to the colonial policies that Kipling and Henley had upheld.

Blunt's principal publications were: *Love Sonnets of Proteus*, 1880; *The Future of Islam*, 1882; *The Wind and the Whirlwind*, 1883; *Ideas about India*, 1885; *In Vinculis*, 1889; *A New Pilgrimage*, 1889; *Esther*, 1892; *The Stealing of the Mare*, 1892; *Griselda*, 1893; *Satan Absolved*, 1899; *Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia*, 1903; *The Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt*, 1907; *India under Ripon*, 1909; *Gordon at Khartoum*, 1911; *The Land War in Ireland*, 1912; *Poetical Works*, 1914; *My Diaries*, 1919-20.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The poems of Mr. Blunt are vital because they are an attempt to reveal and revalue the stuff of life. . . . We find in many of Mr. Blunt's poems the charm of the English countryside—that peaceful land of color and fragrance, with its green hedges and ploughed fields, its sheep on the hillsides, its myriad wild flowers by the wayside, and its sanctuaries of woodland beauty. . . . With a few notes of emotion rendered into melody the poet sings the beauty of rural life. . . . It is by his sonnet work that Mr. Blunt will be judged as a poet, and his finest poems in that form alone entitle him to a place among the masters of English verse."—S. J. Looker, *Poetry Review*, July-Aug., 1921, pp. 198 ff.

## GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS
## (1844-89), p. 776

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Poems*, ed., with notes, by Robert Bridges (Milford, London, 1918).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), romantic in thought and religion, radical in his artistic principles, wrote tense and fervent poems as a child, and received an early education intended to prepare him for the English church. He came, however, in 1866 under the magnetic influence of Cardinal Newman and was filled with a religious enthusiasm that resulted in his becoming a Roman Catholic. For a time he studied at Oxford with Walter Pater as his tutor; but in 1868 he entered the Jesuit order as a novice, burned his early poetry, went to live for several months with Newman in Birmingham, saw much of Coventry Patmore, and then went to serve as a missionary in the slums of Liverpool. By nature extremely sensitive and by training fastidious, he was violently shocked by the vice and dirt of Liverpool; he fled shortly to London, received a church in Oxford, and was later appointed to the staff of the University of Dublin. His poetical work, interrupted for seven years by his religious preoccupation, was his chief pleasure in Ireland, where he was little at home and felt by his associates to be a rather unaccountable fellow; perhaps from Patmore's influence, his later poetic style became increasingly unorthodox, in diction and form. After five years in Dublin, he died suddenly from a contagious fever. He had published nothing; his manuscript poems passed into the keeping of Robert Bridges, who edited them for the press in 1918.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Some of his [Hopkins's] meters are woven with such tortuous subtlety, with such tremulous ingenuity, that the endurance of most readers will faint and fail before the task of penetrating through them to what lies beyond; one must tear oneself through thorns and briars, as it were, and not many suffer willingly so stern a trial of onset. Sometimes so opulently obscure is his imagery that only the most painstaking lovers of poetry can hope to win their difficult way to his thought. . . . Yet from the pen of this poet there also came poems and lyrics as crystal-clear as the globèd dew, as musical and unlabored as the song of a thrush among the leaves."—H. A. Lappin, *Catholic World*, July, 1919, pp. 511-12.

### CRITICAL NOTES

The poems of Hopkins become less difficult to read when we understand something of his principle of metrics. Some of his poems are written in what he calls "Sprung Rhythm," which is measured by feet of one to four syllables, with the stress always on the first syllable of the foot. He says too that this rhythm provides greater flexibility in the verse by allowing any one kind of foot to follow any other kind. "It is natural in Sprung Rhythm," he adds, "for the lines to be *rove over*, that is, for the scanning of each line immediately to take up that of the one before, so that if the first has one or more syllables at its end the other must have so many the less at its beginning; and in fact the scanning runs on without break from the beginning, say, of a stanza to the end and all the stanza is one long strain, though written in lines asunder."—Preface, quoted by Bridges in his edition of Hopkins's *Poems*, p. 4.

## JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS
## (1840-93), p. 778

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Addington Symonds (1840-93) acquired from his father, a physician with wide and varied tastes and a large collection of books and sculpture, an absorbing interest in the arts of Greece and Italy. In his early years his shy charm discovered itself to but a few friends; lacking an interest in sports, he occupied himself in reading and labored hard at Oxford in winning academic distinctions and prizes for a historical poem and an essay. His health breaking down, his nerves and lungs in a precarious state, he journeyed in Italy and Switzerland; although he recovered sufficiently to marry in 1864 and to begin the study of law, he was again threatened with tuberculosis and was forced to spend several years abroad. Not until 1868 could he engage at all regularly in study and writing; and not until 1873, after having published various volumes of travel sketches and Greek studies, did he begin the great work of his life, his research into the history and art of the Italian Renaissance. In 1877 his health once more forced him to go abroad, this time to Davos in the Swiss Alps, where he lived with few intervals until his death. With an enthusiasm for democracy and for comradeship that made him feel Whitman a congenial spirit, he entered into the community life of Davos and made friends of the artisans and peasants; attracted by his presence, other Englishmen, notably Robert Louis Stevenson, came to share his exile. To Stevenson was dedicated his translation from the songs of medieval students, called *Wine, Women, and Song* (1884). Despite the lack of research facilities and intermittent moods of depression caused by physcial weakness, Symonds continued, with amazing energy, his historical and literary writing: biographies of Shelley and Michelangelo, studies of Elizabethan drama, and essays in criticism. Stimulated by his translations from Michelangelo and other Italian poets, he began the composition of poetry in 1878, reflecting his wide interests and his occasional somewhat morbid tendency toward introspection in four closely consecutive volumes. The latter part of his life was saddened by the death of relatives and his own gradual wasting-away from consumption. The end came in 1893.

Symonds's principal publications were: *Introduction to the Study of Dante*, 1872; *Sketches in Italy and Greece*, 1874; *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 1873-76; *The Renaissance in Italy*, 1875-86; *Shelley*, 1878; *Many Moods*, 1878; *New and Old*, 1880; *Animi Figura*, 1882; *Vagabunduli Libellus*, 1884; *Shakspere's Predecessors*, 1884; *Wine, Women and Song*, 1884; *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini* (trans.), 1887; *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, 1890; *Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 1892; *In the Key of Blue*, 1893; *Walt Whitman*, 1893.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"In spite of his [Symonds's] verbal ceremoniousness, and a habit of mind that too often led him from simple and stirring imaginative thought into every deft kind of fancy, he is justly allowed the honor of representation among his country's poets. Not only had he great richness in description, which could be arresting when it was not unbridled, but there were moments when he wrote simply and with his eye on his object. . . . There were other times when his very virtuosity reached such a pitch as to force something more than astonishment, as in *Le Jeune Homme Caressant sa Chimère*, where he achieves a brilliance equaled by very few of his contemporaries. Yet better, he could now and again subject himself to real emotional truth, and express it with sustained if unequal directness, as in *Stella Maris*. This sonnet sequence . . . as a whole does give real and often beautiful expression to a profound and passionate experience. There is here a spiritual intensity which Symonds generally missed, but by virtue of his having achieved it here and in one or two other places, he claims his place in the company of genuine poets."—John Drinkwater, *The English Poets* (ed. by T. H. Ward), Vol. 5, pp. 444-45.

## JOHN TODHUNTER
## (1839-1916), p. 781

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Selected Poems*, ed. by D. L. Todhunter and A. P. Graves (Mathews, London, 1929).
*The Banshee and Other Poems* (Paul, London, 1888).
*Forest Songs* (Paul, London, 1881).
*From the Land of Dreams*, with an introduction by T. W. Rolleston (Unwin, London, 1919).
*Isolt of Ireland* (Dent, London, 1927).
*Laurella and Other Poems* (King, London, 1877).
*Sounds and Sweet Airs* (Mathews, London, 1904).
*Trivium Amoris; and the Wooing of Artemus* (Dent, London, 1927).
*Essays*, with a foreword by S. O'Grady (Mathews, London, 1921).

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

*Boyd, E. A.*: "John Todhunter," *Ireland's Literary Renaissance* (Knopf, New York, 1922).
*Dublin University Magazine*, "Todhunter's *Laurella and Other Poems*, Feb., 1877 (89:282-84).
*Irish Monthly*, "John Todhunter," Mar., 1889 (17:145-53).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Todhunter (1839-1916), the oldest and most experienced among the writers who inaugurated the Irish Literary Revival, was born of Quaker parentage in Dublin; he studied medicine, and practiced as a doctor for seven years in Dublin before abandoning his profession and going to live as a writer in London. His first poetry, published in 1876 under the title *Laurella and Other Poems*, was English in tone and classic in background; his esteem for Greek drama was shown in a series of plays produced from 1879 to 1886. After the latter date, however, he became associated with W. B. Yeats and Lionel Johnson in meetings of the Rhymers' Club held at the Cheshire Cheese in London, became one of the original members of the Irish Literary Society and of the Gaelic League, contributed to *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland* in 1888, and thus aided in launching the Celtic movement in literature. His poetry and his personality both underwent a change: like an ancient Irish bard he chanted his poetry to his fellow enthusiasts, and in his *Banshee and Other Poems* (1888) he gave impassioned expression to the Celtic spirit. Yet he failed to follow the Irish group in later developments, became once more an Englishman, and in subsequent volumes of verse reverted to his earlier manner.

Todhunter's principal publications were: *Laurella and Other Poems*, 1876; *Alkestis*, 1879; *A Study of Shelley*, 1880; *Forest Songs*, 1881; *The True Tragedy of Rienzi*, 1882; *Helen in Troas*, 1885; *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland* (with Yeats and others), 1888; *The Banshee and Other Poems*, 1888; *How Dreams Come True*, 1890; *A Sicilian Idyll*, 1891; *The Poison Flower*, 1891; *Three Bardic Tales*, 1896; *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, 1905.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"In the mechanism of meter, Mr. Todhunter is a very skilful artist; and in his first volume [*Laurella and Other Poems*] especially he seems to have aimed at as great variety as possible. . . . The lyrical pieces . . . are full of melody and color. . . . Mr. Todhunter has learned well . . . how to reproduce that Celtic atmosphere which has no glamour of splendor or color, but is like a Twilight of the Gods wherein loom barbaric heroes and barbaric heroism, vast and misty; and there is a wild, somewhat inconsequent network of witchcraft and giants, of spells and enchantment, mixed with human action. But the strongest poem in the new book [*The Banshee and Other Poems*] is a savage, fine ballad of later days, *Aghadoe*."—*Irish Monthly*, Jan., 1889, pp. 147 ff.

## WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY
## (1849-1903), p. 782

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Works*, 7 vols. (Nutt, London, 1908).
*Works*, 5 vols. (Macmillan, London, 1921).
*Poems* (Scribner, New York, 1928).
*Poems* (Macmillan, London, 1921).
*Essays* (Macmillan, London, 1921).
*Views and Reviews* (Macmillan, London, 1921).
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Stephen, H.: "William Ernest Henley as a Contemporary and an Editor," *Mercury*, Feb., 1926 (13:387-400).

### CRITICISM

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Blackburn, V.: "W. E. Henley," *Fortnightly Review*, Aug., 1903 (80:232-38).
Blackshaw, R.: "William Ernest Henley," *Critic*, Sept., 1903 (43:261-63).
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Hind, C. L.: "W. E. Henley," *Authors and I* (Lane, New York, 1921).

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Nichols, W. B.: "The Influence of Henley," *Living Age*, July 9, 1921 (310:88-92).

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Symons, A.: "Some Makers of Modern Verse," *Forum*, Dec., 1921 (66:476-88).

Thompson, F.: "William Ernest Henley," *A Renegade Poet, and Other Essays* (Ball, Boston, 1910).

Thompson, F.: "The Work of W. E. Henley," *Current Literature* (35:364-65).

Watson, H. B. M.: "Living Critics: W. E. Henley," *Bookman*, Nov., 1895 (2:186-88).

Watson, H. B. M.: "William Ernest Henley," *Living Age*, Aug. 15, 1903 (238:443-45).

Yeats, W. B.: "Four Years, 1887-1891," *London Mercury*, June, 1921 (4:129-40).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Ernest Henley (1849-1903), whose admiration for heroism is one of the dominant motives of his thought and poetry, was himself the hero of a lifelong contest against physical handicaps. After an elementary education at the Crypt Grammar School at Gloucester, where the Manx poet, T. E. Brown, gave his literary ambitions a great impetus, he contracted a tubercular disease which necessitated the amputation of a foot. When his doctors later advised the amputation of the other foot, he journeyed in 1873 to Edinburgh, placed himself under the care of Dr. Joseph Lister, the discoverer of antiseptic surgery, and was restored to at least partial health. During his twenty-month confinement in the Edinburgh Infirmary, he recorded his impressions in his *In Hospital* (1888), reflected his defiantly courageous mood in his *Invictus* (1888), and began a long friendship with Robert Louis Stevenson, who came on several occasions to talk at his bedside. Discharged from the hospital, Henley, after a term of hack-writing in Edinburgh, settled in 1877 at London, writing essays and reviews for periodicals and collaborating with Stevenson in a series of plays. He worked his way up to the editorship, successively, of three important journals. As editor, he was on terms of hearty friendship with his contributors, among whom were Kipling, Brown, Lang, Yeats, and, until an unfortunate disagreement, Stevenson; he championed new movements in literature and art, the painting of Whistler, the sculpture of Rodin, and the poetry of Blunt and Hardy; he joined with Kipling in advocating English imperialism in opposition to the pacific policies of Gladstone, and in vehemently supporting the Boer War. In his poetry, composed in the intervals of his editorial work, he departed from traditional principles and wrote independently with a joyous acceptance of life as it is. Powerful in frame, crippled but indomitable, with his leonine head and keen blue eyes, he was not unlike Stevenson's portraits of him as John Silver in *Treasure Island* and Burly in *Talk and Talkers;* with his forceful conversation and trenchant criticism, he dominated his group in London, and exerted an influence that is still bearing fruit.

Henley's principal publications were: *Deacon Brodie* (with R. L. Stevenson), 1880; *Beau Austin*, *Admiral Guinea* (with R. L. Stevenson), 1884; *Macaire* (with R. L. Stevenson), 1885; *A Book of Verses*, 1888; *Views and Reviews*, 1890; *The Song of the Sword and Other Verses*, 1892; *For England's Sake*, 1900; *Hawthorne and Lavender*, 1901; *A Song of Speed*, 1903.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mr. Henley, of all the poets of the day, is the most strenuously certain that life is worth living, the most eagerly defiant of fate, the most heroically content with death. There is, indeed, something of the spirit of Walt Whitman in his passion for living. . . . His special 'note,' in the earlier work particularly, is a manly Bohemianism, a refreshingly reckless joy in the happy accidents of existence. . . . His outlook on life is joyous, in spite of misfortune; his outlook on destiny and death is grave, collected, welcoming. . . . Revolutionary always, Mr. Henley has had a wholesome but perilous discontent with the conventions of language and of verse. . . . What Mr. Henley has brought into the language of poetry is a certain freshness, a daring straightforwardness and pungency of epithet, very refreshing in contrast with the traditional limpidness and timidity of the respectable verse of the day. One feels at times that the touch is a little rough, the voice a trifle loud, the new word just a little unnecessary. But with these unaccustomed words and tones Mr. Henley does certainly succeed in flashing the picture, the impression upon us, in realizing the intangible, in saying new things in a new and fascinating manner."—Arthur Symons, *Fortnightly Review*, Aug., 1892, pp. 183 ff.

## ANDREW LANG (1844-1912), p. 795

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Poetical Works*, 4 vols. ed. by Mrs. Lang (Longmans, London, 1923).

*Andrew Lang* (Poems) (Benn, London, 1926).

*Adventures among Books* (Longmans, London, 1905).
*Books and Bookmen* (Longmans, London, 1912).
*Custom and Myth* (Longmans, London, 1893).
*Essays in Little* (Longmans, London, 1906).
*Essays of Today and Yesterday* (Harrap, London, 1928).
*Homer and the Epic* (Longmans, London, 1893).
*Homer and His Age* (Longmans, London, 1906).
*Letters on Literature* (Longmans, London, 1893).
*Letters to Dead Authors* (Scribner, New York, 1893).
*Magic and Religion* (Longmans, London, 1901).
*Modern Mythology* (Longmans, London, 1897).
*Myth, Ritual, and Religion* (Longmans, London, 1899).
*New and Old Letters to Dead Authors* (Longmans, London, 1907).
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Canton, W.: "Andrew Lang as a Poet," *Bookman*, Aug., 1895 (2:24-26).
Chislett, W., Jr.: "Andrew Lang, Scholar-Critic," *Moderns and Near Moderns* (Grafton, New York, 1928).
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Gosse, E.: "Andrew Lang," *Portraits and Sketches* (Scribner, New York, 1912).
Gosse, E.: "Andrew Lang," *Silhouettes* (Heinemann, London, 1925).
Hamilton, C.: "Adventures with Andrew Lang," *Literary Digest International Book Review*, Sept., 1923.
Henry, S.: "Andrew Lang—an Old-Fashioned Memory," *Bookman*, Sept., 1912 (36:38-42).
Hind, C. L.: "Andrew Lang," *Authors and I* (Lane, New York, 1921).
Hutchinson, H. G.: "Andrew Lang," *Portraits of the Eighties* (Unwin, London, 1920).
Hutchinson, H. G.: "Andrew Lang's Poetry," *Edinburgh Review*, Oct., 1923 (238-270:86).
Jacobs, J.: "Andrew Lang as Man of Letters and Folk-Lorist," *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, Oct., 1913 (26:367-72).
Macdonell, Annie: "Living Critics: Andrew Lang," *Bookman*, April, 1896 (3:114-17).
Matthews, B.: "Mr. Andrew Lang," *Books and Play-Books* (Osgood, London, 1895). Same article in *Century Magazine*, Jan., 1894 (47:375-81).
Matthews, B.: "Andrew Lang and William Shakespeare," *Bookman*, Feb., 1913 (36:658-60).
*Quarterly Review*, "Andrew Lang; a Symposium," Apr., 1913 (218:299-329).
Repplier, Agnes: "Andrew Lang," *Catholic World*, Dec., 1912 (96:289-97).
Saintsbury, G.: "Andrew Lang in the Seventies—and After," *The Eighteen-Seventies*, ed. by H. Granville-Barker (Cambridge University Press, 1929).
Saintsbury, G.: "Poems of Andrew Lang," *Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1923 (240:262-75).
*Spectator*, "Andrew Lang," July 27, 1912 (109:120-21, 129).
Tomson, G. R.: "Lang's *Ban and Arrière Ban*," *Academy*, June 2, 1894 (45:451-52).

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Andrew Lang (1844-1912), like Robert Louis Stevenson, whom he much resembled in physical appearance, grew up in the border country of Scotland. Many of the themes of his prose and verse have their origin in his boyhood interests—in fishing along the Teviot and the Tweed, in the border ballads and folk legends, in the lost cause of the Stuarts, in Sir Walter Scott, who had been his father's friend. From the Edinburgh Academy, where he was converted by Homer to a liking for Greek, he went to Oxford, where he was much influenced by Matthew Arnold, then a lecturer on poetry, as well as by the Pre-Raphaelites. Morris's example guided his reading into early French literature; he published in 1872 his first poetry, *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France.* His *Ballades in Blue China*, eight years later, was a further fruit of such studies and much encouraged the revival, inaugurated by Swinburne and De Banville, of the old French lyric forms. Meanwhile, Lang, too restless for the academic life, had traveled abroad, married, and begun in London and Scotland a vigorous literary career. He turned his mind and pen in an astonishing variety of directions. After writing for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* articles which ranged from "Crystal-gazing" to "Prometheus," he began with his *Custom and Myth* in 1884 a series of studies in folk-lore; with his translations of Homer and his *Homer and the Epic*, in 1893, his researches in Greek literature; with his *Prince Edward Stuart*, in 1900, his books on Scottish history; he wrote also abundant biographies and criticisms, lectured on history at St. Andrews, collected fairy tales for children in "Books, Yellow, Red, and Green, and Blue," expressed himself on all subjects except personal religion and party politics, and yet found time for cricket and fishing. His verse, much of which was written during the intervals of cricket-matches, concerns his favorite places and heroes, Scottish and Greek, and has the broad background natural to a man who has been called "the greatest bookman of his age."

Lang's principal publications were: *Ballads and Lyrics of Old France*, 1872; *Odyssey* (trans., with S. H. Butcher), 1879; *Ballades in Blue China*, 1880-81; *Helen of Troy*, 1882; *Iliad* (trans., with W. Leaf and E. Myers), 1883; *Rhymes à la Mode*, 1884; *Custom and Myth*, 1884; *The Mark of Cain*, 1886; *Letters to Dead Authors*, 1886; *Books and Bookmen*, 1886; *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 1887; *Grass of Parnassus*, 1888; *Angling Sketches*, 1891; *Essays in Little*, 1891; *Letters on Literature*, 1893; *Homer and the Epic*, 1893; *Ban and Arrière Ban*, 1894; *Life of Lockhart*, 1896; *Modern Mythology*, 1897; *The Making of Religion*, 1898; *Prince Charles Edward*, 1900; *History of Scotland*, 1900-07;

*The Mystery of Mary Stuart*, 1901; *John Knox and the Reformation*, 1905; *Adventures among Books*, 1905; *Homer and His Age*, 1906; *The Maid of France*, 1908; *The World of Homer*, 1910; *Shakespeare, Bacon, and the Great Unknown*, 1912; *History of English Literature*, 1912.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mr. Lang's is not the sentiment that may be bawled from the roof-tops: it is the sentiment of old romance, of dim memories, all the more beautiful for their vagueness (as the reflection is often more beautiful than the mirrored object), the sentiment of wet spring woods and birds singing in the early dawn. . . . Somewhat in the vein of Thackeray are his lighter pieces: there is much the same spirit of half-humorous, half-sad, but wholly manly, acceptance of the losses and regrets that must inevitably be the shadow cast by life, much the same tenderness toward youth and laughter."—G. R. Tomson, *Academy*, June 2, 1894, p. 451.

See Stevenson's *To Andrew Lang*, p. 807.

## EDMUND GOSSE (1849-1928), p. 798

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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*Firdausi in Exile, and Other Poems* (Heinemann, London, 1916).
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*Selected Essays*, 2 vols. (Heinemann, London 1928).
*Aspects and Impressions* (Cassell, London, 1922).
*Books on the Table* (Heinemann, London, 1921).
*Critical Kit-Kats* (Scribner, New York, 1914).
*Father and Son* (Heinemann, London, 1928).
*French Profiles* (Scribner, New York, 1914).
*Gossip in a Library* (Scribner, New York, 1914).
*Leaves and Fruit* (Scribner, New York, 1927).
*More Books on the Table* (Heinemann, London, 1923).
*Portraits and Sketches* (Scribner, New York, 1914).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Edmund William Gosse (1849-1928), who belongs as a poet to the school of Dobson and Lang, has given the story of his boyhood in his autobiographic *Father and Son* (1907). His father, a scientist who refused to accept the new theories of Darwin and Lyall, guided his son's mind in strict Calvinistic channels until, under the influence of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and other contacts with poetry, Gosse revolted intellectually and became a part of the artistic world which included Rossetti and Swinburne. As an assistant in the British Museum after 1867 and a translator for the Board of Trade beginning in 1875, he made many contacts with the writers of the time; he had a genius for friendship, a ready humor and sympathy, a nervous energy in conversation, that made him a welcome member of many literary coteries. His interest in Elizabethan poetry and the old French lyric forms influenced his *Madrigals, Songs, and Sonnets*, which he produced with J. A. Blaikie in 1870, and his first independent volume of verse, *On Viol and Flute*, in 1873. In periodical articles he introduced Ibsen in 1870 to the British public, published other Scandinavian studies, and invented the type of essay that he called the "Kit-Kat," combining criticism with graphic personal impressions of men with whom his wide contacts had made him intimately acquainted. From 1884 to 1890 he was a lecturer on English Literature at Cambridge; from 1904 to 1914 he was librarian of the House of Lords; from that time to his death in 1928 he was an active sympathizer with new literary fashions but a link with the older world. He stated in the preface to his *Collected Poems* in 1911: "If I am a poet at all, I belong to the age of the Franco-German War, of the introduction of Japanese Art into Europe, of the discoveries of Huxley and Haeckel, and of the Oxford lectures of Matthew Arnold."

Gosse's principal publications were: *Madrigals, Songs, and Sonnets* (with J. A. Blaikie), 1870; *On Viol and Flute*, 1873; *Northern Studies*, 1879; *New Poems*, 1879; *Life of Gray*, 1882; *Seventeenth Century Studies*, 1883; *Firdausi in Exile, and Other Poems*, 1885; *History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, 1889; *Gossip in a Library*, 1891; *Questions at Issue*, 1893; *Jacobean Poets*, 1894; *In Russet and Silver*, 1894; *Critical Kit-Kats*, 1896; *Hypolympia*, 1901; *French Profiles*, 1905; *Coventry Patmore*, 1905; *Father and Son*, 1907; *Henrik Ibsen*, 1908; *The Autumn Garden*, 1908; *Portraits and Studies*, 1912; *Inter Arma*, 1916; *Life of Swinburne*, 1917; *Diversions of a Man of Letters*, 1919; *Malherbe*, 1920; *Books on the Table*, 1921; *Aspects and Impressions*, 1922; *More Books on the Table*, 1923; *Silhouettes*, 1925; *Leaves and Fruit*, 1927.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"His [Gosse's] graceful, melodious verse, flawless in construction, delicate in form, does not anywhere show signs of passionate conviction or imperious stress; it has none of the 'perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart.' Intensity there is, but it is the intensity of enjoyment; Mr. Gosse's poems are full of the spirit of the sunlit wood, the breezy headland, the fragrant garden-walks at dusk; they are full of the cheerful felicity that plays about the wholesome energies of life. . . . There is an equable lucidity about his expression. . . . There is nothing that can jar on the most sensitive reader either in feeling or expression. . . . He is preëminently a lyric poet, the singer of a swift and passing mood; he has none of the sustained energy of the epic poet, nor the penetrating psychology of the dramatist. . . . Delicacy rather than intensity, that is the keynote of his lyrics."—A. C. Benson, *Essays*, pp. 295 ff.

## ALICE CHRISTIANA MEYNELL
## (1850-1922), p. 800

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Alice Christiana Meynell (1850-1922) grew up in a delightfully artistic and untidy household in Italy, where her mother painted sunsets and her father, a dilletante in many fields, devoted himself to his children's education. While still young, Mrs. Meynell became a Roman Catholic, and other members of the family followed her. The example of Christina Rossetti and Mrs. Browning set her to writing poetry in her early girlhood; her *Preludes*, published in 1875, won the praise of the greatest literary figures of the time: Rossetti, George Eliot, Ruskin, and Browning. Like Elizabeth Barrett, she attracted her future husband first of all by her poems; Wilfrid Meynell, then a promising young writer of reviews in London, read her sonnets and sought an introduction; after a short engagement, they were married in 1877. For many years Mrs. Meynell wrote little poetry. In the intervals of bearing eight children, she attached herself passionately to humanitarian causes: the prevention of cruelty to animals, the amelioration of conditions in London slums, the extension of political suffrage and industrial rights to women. One of her many acts of kindness for which the world loved her was her rescue of Francis Thompson from poverty and the opium habit and her wise care of him in later years. Encouraged by the hearty interest of W. E. Henley, she began writing reviews and essays in prose; she contributed a weekly column to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and published in magazines her sensitive essays, the earliest of which she collected and published under the titles of *The Rhythm of Life* (1893), *The Color of Life* (1896), and *The Spirit of Place* (1899). Her life was rounded out by a final poetic period, beginning with the World War, and ending with her *Last Poems* in 1923. Mrs. Meynell's life was enriched with many interesting friendships; Patmore and Meredith both owed much to her helpful spirit.

Mrs. Meynell's principal publications were: *Preludes*, 1875; *Poems* (a reprint, with additions, of *Preludes*), 1893; *The Rhythm of Life*, 1893; *The Color of Life*, 1896; *London Impressions*, 1898; *The Spirit of Peace*, 1899; *John Ruskin*, 1900; *Ceres' Runaway*, 1909; *A Father of Women*, 1917; *Hearts of Controversy*, 1917; *The Second Person Singular, and Other Essays*, 1921; *Last Poems*, 1923.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The motives of her [Mrs. Meynell's] poems are neither obvious nor far-fetched; they never quite lack the charm of things familiar, and yet they always possess the charm of things that are new, not with the novelty of inherent strangeness, but with the finer, rarer novelty of strongly individualized apprehension and presentation. In her landscape the poet sees what we ourselves have seen, but sees it with a difference that at once recalls and supplements our own remembrance; in her moods of emotion or reflection she feels and thinks as we may have thought or felt, and yet by the imaginative individuality of the thinking or feeling gives to the utterance of it a certain uniqueness which touches us to delightful surprise."—J. A. Noble, *The Poets and the Poetry of the Century* (ed. A. H. Miles), Vol. 8, p. 422.

## ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
## (1850-94), p. 802

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), born in Edinburgh, was an invalid from his earliest youth to the end of life, and yet contrived to live abundantly. He was kept alive in his boyhood chiefly through the diligence of his nurse, Allison Cunningham, whom he called "Cummy." He could attend school only for short periods, and yet absorbed from various sources a wide knowledge of men and books. From his father and grandfather, both engineers and builders of lighthouses along the rugged Scottish coast, Stevenson learned to love the sea air and the vigorous hardships of an out-of-door life. He at first intended to adopt the family profession, made inspection trips with his father to lighthouses, and studied engineering at the University of Edinburgh; but his interests became gradually centered in literature. He posed as an idler, took pleasure in the Bohemian society of Edinburgh, and acted the gay vagabond; yet he was in reality, in the intervals of illness, continually practicing the art of writing, and making himself the master of a highly individual prose style. He contributed to journals, in the years following 1876, a series of essays later collected as *Virginibus Puerisque* (1881) and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (1882), and such stories as *A Lodging for the Night* and *The Sire de Maletroit's Door.* For health and adventure he went, alone or with friends, on many gypsy wanderings: in a sail-boat through the Western Islands, in a canoe along the rivers of Belgium and France, and with a donkey in the mountains of southern France; returning, he wrote his *Inland Voyage* (1878), *Travels with a Donkey* (1879), and other travel sketches. In France he met Mrs. Fanny Osbourne, fell in love with her, and in 1879 followed her to California, where a dangerous lung attack would have ended his life had it not been for Mrs. Osbourne's careful nursing. In 1880 they were married; but tuberculosis had taken so strong a hold on Stevenson that he could only defer the end by will-power and by a restless search for a healthful climate. For a time he lived near John Addington Symonds at Davos in the Swiss Alps; and there spun out of an imagination that had always a sympathy with the child-mind, the tale that brought him fame, *Treasure Island* (1882). In Southern France, at Bournemouth on the English coast, in the Adirondacks of New York, Stevenson successively sought health and continued his writing; at his house of Skerryvore at Westbourne he wrote his *Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), another volume of poetry, *Underwoods* (1887), and collaborated with W. E. Henley in the writing of four plays. From California in 1888 he departed on his last quest for health, a leisurely voyage in the schooner *Casco* among the islands of the Pacific, writing his novels, his tales, and his *Ballads* (1890) under a tropic sun. At length, delighted by the scenery and the primitive native life, he settled in Samoa, on his mountain-side plantation of Vailima; there he enjoyed a temporary return of health, ruled his natives like a beneficent feudal lord, and wrote with an energy born of a realization that the end must come soon. When it came in 1894, it was sudden and painless; according to his wish, he was buried on a mountain-peak overlooking the sea.

One of the most conspicuous qualities of Stevenson was his versatility. He was the foremost essayist since Lamb, a master of fiction in two fields (romance and the short story), a dramatist, and a poet. He was animated by a genuine enthusiasm for literature as a fine art. A great ethical purpose underlay most of his work. Regarding romance as a necessary element in life, he revived the romantic novel, in which he exalted fine conduct based upon a thoughtful sense of duty. His was a gospel of the joy of life, and his heroic acceptance of the wholesomeness of human effort without any idea of gain permeated all his thought and action.

Stevenson's principal publications were: *An Inland Voyage*, 1878; *Travels with a Donkey*, 1879; *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881; *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, 1882; *New Arabian Nights*, 1882; *Treasure Island*, 1882; *Silverado Squatters*, 1883; *Prince Otto*, 1885; *A Child's Garden of Verses*, 1885; *More New Arabian Nights, The Dynamiter*, 1885; *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 1886; *Kidnapped*, 1886; *The Merry Men*, 1886; *Underwoods*, 1887; *Memories and Portraits*, 1887; *The Black Arrow*, 1888; *The Wrong Box* (with L. Osbourne), 1888; *The Master of Ballantrae*, 1889; *Father Damien*, 1890; *Ballads*, 1890; *Across the Plains*, 1892; *The Wrecker* (with L. Osbourne), 1892; *Island Nights' Entertainments*, 1893; *Catriona* (David Balfour), 1893; *The Ebb Tide*, (with L. Osbourne) 1894; *Vailima Letters*, 1895; *Weir of Hermiston*, 1896; *Songs of Travel*, 1896; *St. Ives* (completed by A. T. Quiller-Couch), 1897.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"The first thing which struck the reader of *A Child's Garden* was the extraordinary clearness and precision with which the immature fancies of eager childhood were reproduced in it. . . . It gives us a unique thing, a transcript of that child-mind which we have all possessed and enjoyed, but of which no one, except Mr. Stevenson, seems to have carried away a photograph. . . . Many authors have achieved brilliant success in describing children, in verbally caressing them, in amusing, in instructing them; but only two, Mrs. Ewing in prose, and Mr. Stevenson in verse, have sat down with them without disturbing their fancies, and have looked into the world of 'make-believe' with the children's own eyes.

"In . . . a second volume, this time of grown-up verses, Mr. Stevenson has ventured on a bolder experiment. His *Underwoods*, with its title openly borrowed from Ben Jonson, . . . is plainly the work of the same fancy that described the Country of Counterpane and the Land of Story-books, but it has grown a little sadder and a great deal older. There is the same delicate sincerity, the same candor and simplicity, the same artless dependence on the good faith of the public. . . . The book is occupied with friendship, with nature, with the honorable instincts of man's moral machinery. Above all, it enters with great minuteness, and in a very confidential spirit, into the theories and moods of the writer himself. It will be to many readers a revelation of the everyday life of an author whose impersonal writings have given them so much and so varied pleasure. . . . The same characteristics are displayed in the poems, the same suspicion of 'the abhorred pedantic sanhedrin,' the same fulness of life, the same bright felicity of epithet as in the essays and romances."—E. Gosse, *Questions at Issue*, pp. 241 ff.

*To R. L. S.*

A wandering singer through the realm of dreams,
He tuned his pipe to Life's brief-voicéd song,
And danced adown a pathway lit with gleams
Of fortitude and resignation born.
No comrade spirit knew his staunch heart's pain
Nor saw his footsteps lag, nor heard a sigh—
We only knew a sweetness naught could maim,
As hand in hand with Courage he passed by.
He breathed upon life's truths with magic, rare,
Until they took the beauty from his soul,
Or wrought fact into romance — Oh, so fair!
With artistry beyond the common goal.
So with blessed labor, finding Life's face gray,
He smiled, and charmed the haunting hours away.

—R. R. GREENWOOD (From *The Overland Monthly*, Dec., 1913, by permission).

See W. E. Henley's "Apparition," in *In Hospital*, p. 784.

## JAMES KENNETH STEPHEN (1859-92), p. 810

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Lapsus Calami* (Macmillan, Cambridge, 1892).
*Lapsus Calami, and Other Verses*, with a life by H. Stephen (Bowes, Cambridge, Eng., 1909).
*Quo Musa Tendis?* (Macmillan, Cambridge, Eng., 1891).
*James K. Stephen* (Poems) (Benn, London, 1926).

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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Stephen, L.: "Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen" (Smith, London, 1895).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Kenneth Stephen (1859-92) was, like his friend Charles Stuart Calverley, a Cambridge man, a social favorite, and a witty composer of parodies and light verse. As an undergraduate, he was locally famous for his strength in football and his dexterity in Union debates; as a fellow of his college, he was the idol of students; his epigrams, and anecdotes of his conversation, passed into Cambridge tradition. His publications, two volumes of verse and a prose defense of compulsory Greek, imperfectly represent his capabilities; in 1866 he suffered an injury to his head which gradually affected his mental vigor and led to his death at the age of thirty-three.

Stephen's publications were: *Lapsus Calami*, 1891; *Quo Musa Tendis?* 1891, *Lapsus Calami, and Other Verses* (1896).

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"He [Stephen] was an avowed disciple and devoted admirer of Calverley. . . . But though related by education and environment, the two men differed widely in temperament. Calverley was more freakish and irresponsible; he had greater charm, elasticity, and geniality. He was never angry, and Stephen often was, though to excellent purpose, in his diatribes against those who desecrated the river, vulgar Cockney or oversea tourists, and pretentious politicians. Stephen was less of the amused onlooker, more of the castigator. But he, too, trod the beaten way: he was neither a mystic nor a metaphysician, but a man of robust intelligence who hated cant, pretense, and sentimentality, but was capable of generous emotion and even tenderness. . . . As a parodist he fell little short of his master."—C. L. Graves, *The English Poets* (ed. by T. H. Ward), Vol. 5, p. 534.

## OSCAR WILDE (1856-1900), p. 811

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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*Works*, 14 vols. (Methuen, London, 1907-09).
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*Complete Works*, 15 vols. (Putnam, New York, 1922).
*Complete Works*, 12 vols. (Doubleday, Garden City, 1923).
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*Poetical Works*, with a biographical introduction by N. H. Dole (Crowell, New York, 1913).
*Selected Poems* (Methuen, London, 1925).
*Poems* (Boni, New York, 1927).
*Plays*, 4 vols. (Luce, Boston, 1905-20).
*Essays and Lectures* (Methuen, London, 1909).
*De Profundis*, ed. by R. Ross, with an introductory essay by F. Harris (Modern Library, New York, 1926).
*Letters after Reading*, 2 vols. (Reynolds, New York, 1921).
*Letters to Sarah Bernhardt*, ed. by S. Dorian (Haldeman-Julius, Girard, Kansas, 1924).
*Some Letters from Oscar Wilde to Alfred Douglas, 1892-1897*, with notes by A. C. Dennison, Jr., and H. Post, and an essay by A. S. W. Rosenbach (Nash, San Francisco, 1924).
*Sixteen Letters*, ed. with notes by J. Rothenstein (Faber, London, 1930).

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Oscar Fingall O'Flahertie Wills Wilde (1856-1900), wit and æsthete, was born in Dublin of a father who loved many women and a mother who loved clever talk. Precocious and brilliant, he won a gold medal at Dublin for an essay on the Greek comic poets; before he left Oxford in 1878, his wit, his æstheticism, his eccentricities, had already, through rumor and Gilbert's caricature in *Patience*, made him famous in England and abroad. Preaching loudly the doctrine of "art for art's sake," averring that "all good art is useless," affecting long hair, a velvet coat, a sunflower, and an air of elegant indolence, filling his rooms with peacock plumes and blue china, he exaggerated the tendencies that the Pre-Raphaelites had set going, and drew after him a host of young admirers. After leaving Oxford, still bent on astounding the middle-classes, he curled his hair in imitation of the Emperor Nero, and indulged his passion for effete beauty by wearing delicately tinted gloves and a green carnation. His poetry, of which he published a volume in 1881, he threw off with careless grace. "I have given my genius to my life," he said; "to my work only my talent." After a lecture tour in America, during which he sought to convert his audiences from their vulgar taste for ornamented stoves and scroll-work, he wrote a series of sophisticated tales ostensibly for children, and his *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), which, with its subtle undercurrent of suggestion, has been called "the only French novel written in England." Affirming that "industry is the root of all ugliness," Wilde nevertheless worked harder than he cared to admit from 1892 to 1895, producing a series of "trivial comedies for serious people," with plots then thought shocking and dialogue almost unparalleled for cleverness. Wilde was at the height of his vogue, lionized for his wit by dowagers at teas, and idolized by the younger Bohemian set not only for his brilliance but also for an essential kindliness that underlay his posing, when his glory suddenly departed. Enraged by aspersions on his character, he sued a nobleman for libel; the suit failed; counter-charges were made; and in 1895 Wilde was found guilty of sexual abnormalities and sentenced to two years of hard labor. At the jail in Reading he meditated suicide and composed his confessions in a document of forty-five thousand words, a small portion of which has since been printed under the title of *De Profundis* (1905). He found few friends left him when he was liberated. Although he wrote in 1898, while recuperating at Berneval in France, his most effective poem, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, his degeneration was rapid. No longer the elegant dandy of his happier days, he slouched about Paris with frayed cuffs and soiled collar, drinking himself into sodden insensibility, sitting at his table all night in futile efforts to compose. A short illness ended his life in 1900.

Wilde's principal publications were: *Poems*, 1881; *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, 1888; *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891; *Intentions*, 1891; *A House of Pomegranates*, 1892; *Lady Windermere's Fan*, 1892; *A Woman of No Importance*, 1893; *Salome* (in French), 1893; *The Sphinx*, 1894; *The Ideal Husband*, 1895; *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 1895; *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, 1898; *De Profundis*, 1905.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"There are many who read poetry chiefly for its sensuous qualities; these will always delight in Oscar Wilde. No man ever loved beauty more passionately than he, and few have been more sensitive to its various material forms. . . . He possessed the power of vivid and accurate word-painting . . . and the command of that indefinable word-magic which is the rarest and most wonderful quality of poetry. These things do not redeem Wilde's work from materialism; but they beautify his materialism, make it memorable. . . . *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* . . . must be pronounced his best poem. . . . It contains few or no rhetorical flourishes; its diction is simple and poignant; . . . it is passionately sincere. In reading most of Wilde's poems we cannot rid ourselves of the impression that the poet has a very delicious sense of his own cleverness and his own imaginative wealth, and that he is thinking about these things quite as much as about the subject he happens to be treating. In *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* he is desperately in earnest: the bitterness of his own prison experience is still in his mouth, and his pity for the condemned man is passionately genuine. His poem occasionally recalls *The Ancient Mariner*, with which it is not unworthy to be compared. *The Ballad* has less imaginative power and a less perfect finish, but a far more poignant and crying sense of reality. The *Ancient Mariner*, even in its more terrible passages, always suggests a dream; we constantly feel that it is all happening in the magic world of the poet's brain: whereas *The Ballad*, even in its most fantastic stanzas, has somehow the nearness and the fierceness of real life. The whole poem is illumined by the merciless noonday blaze of actuality. . . . For once the barriers of Wilde's eclectic æstheticism are broken down, and he is overcome by a great emotional flood of pity and terror."—H. E. Woodbridge, *Poet Lore*, Nov., 1908, pp. 440-53.

See Douglas's *The Dead Poet*, p. 860.

## EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON
## (1845-1907), p. 819

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Dramatic Sonnets, Poems, and Ballads,* with an introduction by W. Sharp (Scott, London, 1903).
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*Forest Notes* (with Annie Lee) (Richards, London, 1899).
*Gods, Saints, and Men* (Satchell, London, 1881-82).
*Imaginary Sonnets* (Stock, London, 1888).
*Mimma Bella* (Heinemann, London, 1909).
*The New Medusa, and Other Poems* (Stock, London, 1882).
*Poems and Transcripts* (Blackwoods, Edinburgh, 1878).
*The Romance of the Fountain* (Unwin, London, 1905).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Eugene Jacob Lee-Hamilton (1845-1907), educated in France and Germany and at Oxford, had only begun a promising diplomatic career when he was seized by a nervous disorder that compelled him to lie on his back in his bed-chamber at Florence for upwards of twenty years. Active pleasures prohibited, he made what he called "the wingless hours" fly faster by talking with visitors, who made his room one of the chief intellectual centers of Italy, and by writing sonnets, several collections of which were issued during his illness. At length he made an astonishing recovery, toured during 1897 in America, and married on his return Miss Holdsworth, a novelist. In 1904 his only daughter, Persis Margaret, suddenly died; Lee-Hamilton recorded his grief in a volume of sonnets, *Mimma Bella,* and soon after suffered a mortal stroke of paralysis.

Lee-Hamilton's principal publications were: *Poems and Transcripts,* 1878; *Gods, Saints, and Men,* 1880; *The New Medusa and Other Poems,* 1882; *Apollo and Marsyas and Other Poems,* 1884; *Imaginary Sonnets,* 1888; *The Fountain of Youth,* 1891; *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours,* 1894; *Forest Notes* (with Annie Lee), 1899; *The Lord of the Dark Red Star,* 1903; *The Romance of the Fountain,* 1905; *Mimma Bella,* 1909.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mr. Lee-Hamilton's best-known volume, *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours,* . . . contains some twenty sonnets of exceptional beauty and four or five which rank not far after the greatest in the language. . . . He is indeed distinguished not only for sustained dignity of thought and felicity of image, but for a verbal flexibility which almost always enables him to control the exigencies of the sonnet, instead of being controlled by them. . . . The sonnets . . . picture the successive phases of despair, submission, and triumphant courage through which their author passed in the course of his long illness. . . . He suffered too much, and was too keenly sensitive to all the joy and beauty denied him, not to have his moods of dark relapse; but his verse proves that, as the years passed, he found increasing strength to bear his pain, and increasing consolation in that very sensitiveness to imaginative reactions that had once been the cause of his intensest misery."—Edith Wharton, *Bookman,* Nov., 1907, pp. 251-52.

## FRANCIS WILLIAM BOURDILLON
## (1852-1921), p. 820

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*The Night Has a Thousand Eyes, and Other Poems* (Little, Boston, 1899).
*Ailes d'Alouette* (Roberts, Boston, 1891).
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*Moth-Wings* (Mathews, London, 1913).
*Sursum Corda* (Unwin, London, 1893).
*Through the Gateway, and Other Poems* (Humphreys, London, 1902).
*Verses,* by V. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1910).
*Young Maids and Old China* (Ward, London, 1888).
*Gerard and Isabel* (Moring, London, 1921).
*A Lost God* (Mathews, London, 1891).
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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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*Living Age,* "Mr. Bourdillon's Poems," Sept. 7, 1878 (138:636-38).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Francis William Bourdillon (1852-1921), the son of a clergyman who composed gentle books for children and invalids, was educated at Oxford and lived a retired and scholarly life as a tutor, first to "the two sons of Their R. H.'s Prince and Princess Christian at Cumberland Lodge," and then to boys preparing for the universities. His chief diversions were mountain climbing and reading in old French literature and the ancient classics; he belonged to the best clubs and had a country estate; his marriage in 1882 was congenial and his life uneventful.

Bourdillon's principal publications were: *Among the Flowers and Other Poems,* 1878;

*Aucassin and Nicolette* (trans.), 1887; *Young Maids and Old China*, 1888; *Ailes d'Alouette*, 1890; *A Lost God*, 1891; *Sursum Corda*, 1893; *Nephele*, 1896; *Minuscula*, 1897; *Through the Gateway, and Other Poems*, 1902; *Roman de la Rose* (trans.), 1906; *Preludes and Romances*, 1908; *Moth Wings*, 1913; *Christmas Roses for Nineteen Hundred and Fourteen*, 1914; *Gerard and Isabel*, 1921.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The specific charm of Mr. Bourdillon's best verse is that it shows this fineness of touch on themes serener and higher and nobler than those which most interest the young poets of the present day. There is an air of purity and restfulness, in short, of spiritual loveliness, about the better of these poems, slight and all but gossamer in fiber as they are, which diffuses itself through the mind of the reader, and makes him, too, live for a few moments in what Milton calls 'empyrean' air."—A. L. L., *Living Age*, Sept. 7, 1878, p. 637.

## WILLIAM SHARP ("Fiona Macleod") (1856-1905), p. 821

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Writings of "Fiona Macleod,"* 7 vols., arranged by Mrs. Sharp (Duffield, New York, 1909-10).
*Selected Writings*, 4 vols., arranged by Mrs. Sharp (Duffield, New York, 1912).
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Le Gallienne, R.: "The Mystery of Fiona Macleod," *Forum*, Feb., 1911 (45:170-79).
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Rhys, E.: "The New Mysticism," *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1900 (73:1045-56).
Rhys, E.: "William Sharp and Fiona Macleod," *Century Magazine*, May, 1907 (74:111-17).
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Sharp, Mrs. Elizabeth A.: *William Sharp (Fiona Macleod)*, 2 vols., with a bibliography (Duffield, New York, 1912).
Steinmetz, G.: "Fiona Macleod," *Canadian Magazine*, July, 1911 (37:282-87).
Weygandt, C.: "William Sharp," *Irish Plays and Playwrights* (Houghton, Boston, 1913).
Yeats, W. B.: "The Later Work of Fiona Macleod," *North American Review*, Oct., 1902 (175:473-85).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Sharp (1856-1905), who expressed the more mystic side of his personality under the pseudonym of Fiona Macleod, was born in Paisley at the foot of the Scottish Highlands. Even as William Sharp, before the invention of the extraordinary Fiona, there was little that was commonplace about his career. Restless under discipline, he ran away three times from school, attempted to stow away on an ocean vessel, browsed in the Library of the University of Glasgow in preference to attending classes, and, after his graduation, spent two months with a band of gypsies. Still vagrant, he used a threatened attack of consumption as the excuse for a voyage to Australia; on his return, he lost several positions in London, fell in with Rossetti and his circle, studied art in Rome, made journeys to America, Germany, and North Africa, married his cousin, and learned to earn a livelihood by his pen. His earliest poems, including *Earth's Voices* (1884), *Romantic Ballads* (1888), and *Sospiri di Roma* (1891), dealt with "Mother Nature and her inner mysteries" and earned him a considerable reputation as a poet of the Swinburne school. In 1890, however, he developed a new sort of romanticism. The Celtic ballads and legends which he had learned from his Highland nurse in boyhood and from other Highlanders in later visits, began to haunt his mind until he became at times a seer who saw in trances and in fervent inner vision another world of transcendent beauty; encouraged by an Italian lady who sympathized with these strange moods and put him "in touch with ancestral memories," he began to describe his visions in prose and verse, and signed these new writings with the name of a Highland girl he once had known, Fiona Macleod. *Pharais, a Romance of the Isles*, in 1894, was the first volume so produced, and was succeeded by a series that created for the mythical Fiona a reputation quite independent of that which William Sharp had previously gained. At the same time he wrote other volumes of verse, fiction, and essays in his old manner over his true name. This amazing duality Sharp continued for the rest of his life; his connection with the Fiona literature was unsuspected; indeed the volume of *Who's Who* for 1906, the last one that contained Sharp's biography, had also an account of Fiona Macleod's career, in which her diversions were described as "sailing, hill-walks, and listening." In his more ordinary life, at his editorial desk or in his study, he was William Sharp; in the hills, with the sweep of the wind fresh against his face, and in his dreams and trances, he was Fiona. This "continued play of two faces" in his personality, added to the strain of upholding two separate literary reputations, broke down his health; after some years of restless wandering, he died in Italy. He left a letter in which his connection with Fiona Macleod was explained.

William Sharp's principal publications were: *Life of Rossetti*, 1882; *The Human Inheritance*, 1882; *Earth's Voices*, 1884; *Romantic Ballads and Poems of Phantasy*, 1888; *Sospiri de Roma*, 1891; *Vistas*, 1894; *The Gypsy Christ*, 1895; *Ecce Puella*, 1896; *Wives in Exile*, 1896; *Silence Farm*, 1899; *The Progress of Art in the Century*, 1902; *Literary Geography*, 1904; *Essays* (two vols.), 1912.

Fiona Macleod's principal publications were: *Pharais*, 1894; *The Mountain Lovers*, 1895; *The Washer of the Ford*, 1896; *Green Fire*, 1896; *From the Hills of Dream*, 1896; *The Laughter of Peterkin*, 1897; *The Divine Adventure, and Other Essays*, 1900; *The House of Usna*, 1900; *The Immortal Hour*, 1900; *The Winged Destiny*, 1904; *Where the Forest Murmurs*, 1906.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The 'Fiona' literature . . . ranges through the domain of pure fantasy, of fable and allegory, of speculation, of æsthetic discussion, of symbolized fiction, and of verse. The voice has spoken many tongues, but always the accent of the mystic has persisted, has persisted and increased in poignancy and aloofness; so that in her later work it is frankly, and without the palliation of pictorial or symbolical setting, the speech and vision of the dreaming mind that is offered us. One will miss the essential note of this writing if one fails to see in it, as its prime possession, the confession and aspirations of a spirit swayed, beyond any other impulse, by a passionate consciousness and a special revelation of all beauty. . . . The sense of it is, for her, a perpetual touchstone for the apperception of . . . that miraculous and supersensuous world in which the spirit of the mystic has its intensest life. . . . One must not neglect to note the authentic presence of Celtic 'magic'; . . . it is movingly and persistently present in the writing of Fiona Macleod, where it is touched with the profound and poignant nostalgia, the wistful ecstasy of the 'Eternal Dreamer.' As she herself has said, through each poem 'goes the wind of the Gaelic spirit, which everywhere desires infinitude; but, in the penury of things as they are, turns to the dim enchantment of dreams.' "—L. Gilman, *North American Review*, Oct., 1906, pp. 674-76.

## LIONEL PIGOT JOHNSON
## (1867-1902), p. 826

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Poetical Works* (Mathews, London, 1915).
*Poems* (Mathews, London, 1895).
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*Ireland, with Other Poems* (Mathews, London, 1897).
*Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers* (Mathews, London, 1911).
*Reviews and Critical Papers*, ed., with an introduction by R. Shafer (Mathews, London, 1921).
"Some Letters of Lionel Johnson," *Criterion*, Apr., 1925 (3:356-63).
*Some Winchester Letters* (Macmillan, New York, 1919).

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

Boyd, E. A.: "Lionel Johnson," *Ireland's Literary Renaissance* (Knopf, New York, 1922).
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Chislett, W., Jr.: "Lionel Johnson: the Classicist as Celt," "A Note on Lionel Johnson," *Moderns and Near Moderns* (Grafton, New York, 1928).
Colby, E.: "The Poetry and Prose of Lionel Johnson," *Catholic World*, Mar., Apr., 1913 (96:721-32; 97:52-63).
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Harris, F.: "Lionel Johnson," *Contemporary Portraits*, Second Series (Harris, New York, 1919).
Hind, C. L.: "Lionel Johnson," *More Authors and I* (Lane, New York, 1922).
More, P. E.: "Two Poets of the Irish Movement," *Shelburne Essays*, First Series (Putnam, New York, 1904).
O'Brien, E. J.: "Lionel Johnson," *Poet Lore*, May, 1915 (26:405-08).
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Scott, D.: "Lionel Johnson's Prose," *Men of Letters* (Hodder, London, 1923).
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Weygandt, C.: "Lionel Johnson, English Irishman," *Tuesdays at Ten* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1928).
Waugh, A.: "Lionel Johnson," *Tradition and Change* (Chapman, London, 1919).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lionel Pigot Johnson (1867-1902) had the distinction of being the only important figure in the Irish literary revival who was not an Irishman. Descended from a distinguished family of soldiers, and educated at Winchester and Oxford, he came first in contact with Celtic life through vacation tramps in Wales and Cornwall. Although his principal literary interest was in poetry, he was forced, through the pressure of debts contracted by his expensive tastes in books and prints, to write reviews for journals; and, the habit once formed, he continued a facile and intelligent reviewer for the rest of his career. By 1892, however, he found leisure for poetry. His themes were related to the two dominant interests of his life: Roman Catholicism and Ireland. Swayed by the romantic beauty of the Roman Catholic tradition and ritual, he became a Roman Catholic in 1891. Already susceptible to Celtic influences through contacts with Wales, he became, in consequence of a visit to Ireland in 1893, an ardent champion of Irish nationalism and a contributor to the revival of Irish literature. After 1900 his health failed from intemperance and a too sedulous devotion to writing, and in 1902 he died.

Johnson's principal publications were: *Bits of Old Chelsea* (with Richard Le Gallienne), 1894; *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, 1894; *Poems*, 1895; *Ireland, with other Poems*, 1897; *Post Liminium: Essays and Critical Papers*, 1911.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"What differentiates Johnson's verses from those of his Irish contemporaries is a certain classic hardness of outline, and a restraint not usually found in the loose reveries and wistful outpourings of the Irish muse. Johnson's Greek and Latin studies, his admiration for Pater, who was his tutor, could not but influence his own writing. Whether the theme be English or Celtic, there is always an aloofness in the passion of the poet; he does not abandon himself utterly to his mood. It was easier for Johnson to be reserved than it was for most of the Irish poets. Classical education, for instance, has rarely been their lot. . . . But more important, as enabling Johnson to exercise the classic virtue of restraint, was the fact that he wrote of Ireland from the head more than from the heart. His conversion to the political tradition of Ireland must necessarily have been largely a matter of intellectual conviction. . . . One might say that Johnson was Yeats with a classical education and the Oxford manner."—Ernest Boyd, *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, pp. 190-93.

## ERNEST CHRISTOPHER DOWSON

## (1867-1900), p. 831

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Complete Poems* (The Medusa Head, New York, 1928).

*Poems*, with a memoir by A. Symons (Lane, London, 1915).

*Poems and Prose*, with a memoir by A. Symons (Boni, New York, 1919).

### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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Flower, N.: "Ernest Dowson," *London Bookman*, Sept., 1926 (70:284-85).

Harris, F.: "Ernest Dowson," *Contemporary Portraits*, Second Series (Harris, New York, 1919).

Lang, A.: "Decadence," *Critic*, Aug., 1900 (37:171-73).

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Symons, A.: "Ernest Dowson," *Studies in Prose and Verse* (Dent, London, 1904). Same article in *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1900 (73:947-57).

Symons, A.: "Mr. Ernest Dowson," *Athenæum*, Mar. 3, 1900 (p. 274).

Thomas, W. R.: "Ernest Dowson at Oxford," *Nineteenth Century*, April, 1928 (103:560-66).

Wheatley, K.: "Ernest Dowson's Extreme Unction," *Modern Language Notes*, May, 1923 (38:315).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ernest Dowson (1867-1900), the profligate author of delicately lovely lyrics, was the son of a dilettante poet whose precarious health compelled him to reside abroad, in Paris and on the Riviera; Dowson's education was therefore Continental and much interrupted, until he came to Oxford. There he read the Latin erotic poets and took hashish for the sake of the vivid dreams that it induced. Leaving Oxford in 1887 without a degree, he went to London; associated with Symons, Yeats, and Lionel Johnson in meetings of the Rhymers' Club at the Cheshire Cheese; made arrangements with a publisher for translations from Baudelaire, Verlaine, and other French poets at a definite weekly stipend; and spent most of his money in stimulants that gave him transient poetic inspiration. Pathetically hungry for love and beauty, he adored from afar the daughter of a French restaurant-keeper in London, followed her with his eyes as he sat at his table until the restaurant closed for the night, and then went home to drink and write lyrics in which she was the central figure. As his resources and health ebbed away, he lurked in dismal quarters about the London docks or the Paris markets, shunning his friends, and writing his poems in low taverns on the backs of smudgy envelopes; yet, in all his dissipation, he retained a certain dilapidated refinement, and his face still had a delicacy like that of Keats. In 1900 he went home from Paris to die. A friend, finding him unconscious, took him to his house; on his last night Dowson read Dickens and talked until five in the morning about the great poems which he was still to write.

Dowson's principal publications were: *A Comedy of Masks* (with Arthur Moore), 1893; *Dilemmas*, 1895; *Verses*, 1896; *The Pierrot of the Minute*, 1897; *Adrian Rome* (with Arthur Moore), 1899; *Decorations*, 1900.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Dowson . . . was quite Latin in his feeling for youth, and death, and 'the old age of roses,' and the pathos of our little hour in which to live and love; Latin in his elegance, reticence, and simple grace in the treatment of these motives; Latin, finally, in his sense of their sufficiency for the whole of one's mental attitude. He used the commonplaces of poetry frankly, making them his own by his belief in them: the Horatian Cynara or Neobule[1] was still the natural symbol for him when he wished to be most personal. I remember his saying to me that his ideal of a line of verse was the line of Poe: 'The viol, the violet, and the vine'; and the gracious, not remote or unreal beauty, which clings about such words and such images as these, was always to him the true poetical beauty. There never was a poet to whom verse came more naturally, for the song's sake; his theories were all æsthetic, almost technical ones, such as a theory, indicated by his preference for the line of Poe, that the letter 'v' was the most beautiful of the letters, and could never be brought into verse too often. For more abstract theories he had neither tolerance nor need. Poetry as a philosophy did not exist for him; it existed solely as the loveliest of the arts. He loved the elegance of Horace, all that was most complex in the simplicity of Poe, most bird-like in the human melodies of Verlaine.[2] He had the pure lyric gift, unweighted or unballasted by any other quality of mind or emotion; and a song, for him, was music first, and then whatever you please afterwards, so long as it suggested, never told, some delicate sentiment, a sigh or caress."—Arthur Symons, *Studies in Prose and Verse*, pp. 274-75.

## JOHN DAVIDSON
## (1857-1909), p. 835

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Selected Poems* (Lane, London, 1905).
*Poems*, with an introduction by R. M. Wenley (Boni, New York, 1924).
*John Davidson* (Poems) (Benn, London, 1925).
*Ballads and Songs* (Lane, London, 1895).
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*Fleet Street Eclogues*, Second Series (Lane, London, 1895).
*Fleet Street and Other Poems* (Kennerley, New York, 1909).
*Holiday and Other Poems* (London, Richards, 1906).
*In a Music Hall and Other Poems* (Ward, London, 1891).
*The Last Ballad and Other Poems* (Lane, London, 1899).
*New Ballads* (Lane, London, 1897).
*The Man Forbid and Other Essays* (Ball, Boston, 1910).
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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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Archer, W.: "John Davidson," *Poets of the Younger Generation* (Lane, London, 1902).
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Scott-James, R. A.: "The Self-Conscious Poet," *Modernism and Romance* (Lane, London, 1908).
Traill, H. D.: "Two Modern Poets," *Fortnightly Review*, Mar., 1895 (63:393-407).
Young, F.: "The New Poetry," *Fortnightly Review*, Jan., 1909 (91:136-52).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

John Davidson (1857-1909), the son of a Scotch evangelical minister, early developed an interest in science, through his employment as chemical analyst in a sugar house. Later he became interested in philosophy, during his career as teacher in several Scotch public and private schools. After writing five plays, he went in 1889 to London with the intention of making his fortune by writing; he made a meager living by journalism and fiction, but gave his talents their freest expression in poetry. His two collections of *Fleet Street Eclogues* and three series of ballads, published from 1891 to 1899, were the amusements of a man who otherwise had few pastimes and little relief from struggles against poverty. With the turn of the century, Davison abandoned poetry to preach, in a series of "Testaments," a philosophic gospel not unlike that of Nietzsche, applying the doctrine of evolution to society, and defending imperialism and self-aggrandizement as the means to human progress. Before he could complete a series of plays, to be called *God and Mammon*, in which his doctrine was the central theme, he was driven by poverty and ill-health into a fit of depression and was prompted, while living at Penzance, to drown himself in Mount's Bay.

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[1] A devotee of Venus, and the subject of Horace's 12th *Ode* in Book 3.
[2] Paul Verlaine (1844-96), a French lyric poet classed with the Symbolists, and said to be "an exquisite master of verse."

Davidson's principal publications were: *Bruce*, 1886; *Scaramouch in Naxos*, 1889; *Perfervid*, 1890; *In a Music Hall and Other Poems*, 1891; *Fleet Street Eclogues*, 1893; *Sentences and Paragraphs*, 1893; *Ballads and Songs*, 1894; *Fleet Street Eclogues: Second Series*, 1896; *New Ballads*, 1897; *The Last Ballad*, 1899; *The Testament of a Vivisector*, 1901; *The Testament of a Man Forbid*, 1901; *The Testament of an Empire Builder*, 1902; *Holiday and Other Poems*, 1906; *The Triumph of Mammon*, 1907; *Mammon and His Message*, 1908; *The Testament of John Davidson*, 1908; *Fleet Street and Other Poems*, 1909.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The most immediately felt charm of Mr. Davidson's verse is its goodly energy and force, its excellent vitality: there is life-blood in the strong and vehement lines. He has not a trace of waterish sentiment and prettiness. . . . Each poem has lived in the poet's life, and issues from a living fire of passion, imagination, thought. . . . And the defects of its qualities are not lacking: a certain feverishness at times, an unpruned wealth of words, a rapidity which makes the verse pant for want of breath. . . . In each poem a situation, an emotion, has been faced and wrestled with and mastered: the solutions are triumphant and satisfying. Where Browning would have written psychological studies, with parry and fence, cut and thrust, of encountering emotions, Mr. Davidson chooses rather to throw his problem into a romantic ballad; applying, to subtile and spiritual themes, the direct narrative vigor and pictorial charm of the ancient ballad story."—Lionel Johnson, *Academy*, Jan. 5, 1895, pp. 6, 7.

## FRANCIS THOMPSON
## (1859-1907), p. 843

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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*New Poems* (Constable, London, 1897).
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*Francis Thompson* (Poems) (Benn, London, 1927).
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### CRITICISM

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Branford, F. V.: "Novissima Verba," *English Review*, Feb., 1923 (36:101-05).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Francis Thompson (1859-1907), one of the most innocent and child-like of men, with a child's gayety and sensitiveness to religious and social impressions, was the son of a provincial doctor, a Catholic, and was designed to follow in his father's profession. He was, however, by temperament and early inclination, a poet. Sent to the best Catholic colleges, he read poetry instead of science; given money to begin his professional work in London, he "idled" in libraries until his father, uncomprehending and exasperated, cut off his allowance. With no notions of how to earn a living, discharged by a shoemaker, with whom he found chance employment, for unpunctuality, he barely kept alive; the few pennies he earned by selling matches and calling cabs at theater doors, he spent for laudanum to deaden his misery. In the midst of this wretched life, untouched by anything approaching moral degradation, he thought in terms of poetry; on an impulse one day he scribbled verses and an essay on *Paganism New and Old* on dirty scraps of paper, slipped them through the mail-slot of the *Merry England* office, and returned to the streets. The editor of *Merry England*, Wilfrid Meynell, left the verses long untouched; when at length he read them, he was astonished, began a search for the author, found him after great difficulty, and invited him to his home. Thompson's first meeting with Alice Meynell and her two charming children was the turning-point of his life. The Meynells reclaimed him from the opium habit and established him in London lodgings; under their wise care his natural good spirits and the poetic impulse returned; *Poems* (1893) was the first fruit of his new life. For the Meynell daughters, who laughed at his quaint ways and adored him, he wrote his *Sister Songs* in 1895; and in 1897 he published a volume entitled *New Poems*, influenced by close association with Coventry Patmore. This volume closed his brief poetic career; asked why he wrote no more verse, he replied that he had said all that he had to say. For the rest of his life he lived cheerfully and devoutly, filled a hundred notebooks with merry observations on life, contributed essays on literature to the journals, saw much of the Meynells and of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, played cricket, until at length his frail body gave way under an attack of consumption.

Thompson's principal publication were: *Poems*, 1893; *Sister Songs*, 1895; *New Poems*, 1897; *Health and Holiness*, 1905.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Francis Thompson was one of the few poets now or lately living in whom there was some trace of that divine essence which we best symbolize by fire. Emptiness he had and extravagances, but he was a poet, and he had made of many influences a new beauty. . . . When he chanted in his chapel of dreams, the airs were often airs which he had learned from Crashaw and Patmore. They came to life again when he used them, and he made for himself a music which was part strangely familiar and part of his own. . . . When he put these dreams and this music into verse, with a craft which he had perfected for his own use, the poetry was for the most part a splendid rhetoric, imaginative and passionless, as if the moods went by, wrapped in purple, in a great procession. . . . The genius of Francis Thompson was Oriental, exuberant in color woven into elaborate patterns, and went draped in old silken robes that had survived many dynasties. The spectacle of him was an enchantment; he passed like a wild vagabond of the mind, dazzling our sight. He had no message, but he dropped sentences by the way, cries of joy or pity, love of children, worship of the Virgin and saints and of those who were patron saints to him on earth; his voice was heard like a wandering music, which no one heeded for what it said, but which came troublingly into the mind, bringing it the solace of its old recaptured melodies. Other poets of his time have had deeper things to say, and a more flawless beauty; others have put more of their hearts into their song; but no one has been a torch waved with so fitful a splendor over the gulfs of our darkness."—Arthur Symons, *Dramatis Personæ*, pp. 180-84.

## ROBERT SEYMOUR BRIDGES
## (1844-1930), p. 851

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Robert Bridges (1844-1930), classical scholar, conscious craftsman in verse, and Poet Laureate of England, was born on the coast of Kent and enjoyed, as his favorite childhood diversion, lying on the cliffs, with his daydreams as his comrades, and watching the restless sea below. Shelley and Keats were his first examples in poetry. After Eton he proceeded to Oxford, where his strength and skill as an oarsman won him the position of stroke on his victorious college crew. He educated himself in medicine and, after a prolonged tour on the Continent and in the East, settled in London as a physician and practiced there for fifteen years. Restive in the hurry and noise of the city, longing for a quiet country life, he retired in 1882 to a suburban residence; after his marriage in 1884, he moved to a Berkshire manor-house with a lovely garden and natural surroundings that provided a setting for many of his poems. As early as 1873 he had begun publishing the shorter lyrics, with an Elizabethan flavor, for which he is chiefly known; and he continued to write them, in the intervals of his larger labors, for the rest of his life. He was, however, chiefly concerned with a series of Greek and Shakespearean masks and plays which he issued from 1883 to 1905, and with experiments in the classic meters. Appointed laureate to succeed Alfred Austin in 1913, he wrote odes of courage during the war and a song of victory at its close, and exerted his influence in favor of phonetic spelling and the purification of English diction and pronunciation. His last utterance in verse was his *Testament of Beauty* in 1929.

Bridges's principal publications were: *Poems*, 1873; *Sonnets*, 1876; *Poems*, 1879; *Poems*, 1880; *Prometheus the Firegiver*, 1883; *Poems*, 1884; *Eros and Psyche*, 1885; *Nero*, 1885; *Sonnets* (*The Growth of Love*), 1889; *The Feast of Bacchus*, 1889; *Achilles in Scyros*, *Palicio*, *The Return of Ulysses*, *The Christian Captives*, 1890; *Shorter Poems* (collected from earlier publications, with additions), 1890-99; *Humors of the Court, and Other Poems*, 1893; *Nero, Part II*, 1894; *New Poems*, 1899; *Milton's Prosody*, 1901; *Bramble Brae*, 1902; *Peace*, 1903; *Now in Wintry Delights*, 1903; *Demeter*, 1905; *The Present State of English Pronunciation*, 1913; *Ibant Obscuri, an Experiment in the Classical Hexameter*, 1916; *The Spirit of Man* (an anthology), 1916; *The Necessity of Poetry*, 1918; *Britannia Victrix*, 1918; *October and Other Poems*, 1920; *New Verses*, 1925; *The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare's Drama*, 1927; *Collected Essays*, 1928; *The Testament of Beauty*, 1929.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mr. Bridges's poems are seldom outcries of passion; they do not often explore the heights and depths of thought; they are in general of faultless evolution, but their design is rarely . . . complex and of large dimensions. Elements of many and various kinds enter into his . . . poems—delicate observation, delight in external nature, delight in art, delight in love, gladness and grief, ethical seriousness, pensive meditation, graceful play of fancy. But all are subdued to balance, measure, harmony; and sometimes our infirmity craves for some dominant note, some fine extravagance, even some splendid sins. Mr. Bridges's audacities are to be found in occasional phrases—often felicitous and of true descriptive or interpretative power, sometimes not felicitous—and in his metrical experiments. But in his metrical experiments there is nothing revolutionary; they are extensions of a true tradition in English verse; they amount to little more than nicely calculated variations of stress. No writer of verse understands his business better than Mr. Bridges; and if finer and subtler harmonies are attained unconsciously or half-unconsciously by greater poets, our ear soon adapts itself to the delicate surprises and delicate satisfactions which he has thought out and felt as a skilled craftsman."—E. Dowden, *Fortnightly Review*, July 1, 1894, pp. 45-46.

## MARY ELIZABETH COLERIDGE (1861-1907), p. 858

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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### BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mary Elizabeth Coleridge (1861-1907) followed her great-granduncle, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, in cultivating a taste for the romantic and the supernatural. Educated at her London home partly under the care of William Johnson Cory, she read and wrote mystically romantic poetry and tales; in 1881 she had her first essays published in periodicals, and in 1893 she issued her first novel, *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus*, which Stevenson highly praised. Her verse, some of it dating from her childhood, remained hidden in manuscript until the future laureate, Robert Bridges, became interested in it and persuaded her to publish a volume, *Fancy's Following*, in 1896; the volume was privately printed in a limited edition, and made her poetic talents known only to the appreciative few to whom she sent copies. In the following year a novel, *The King with Two Faces*, made her famous among a wider public; she continued to write essays and novels for the rest of her life. She did not write much, but unselfishly devoted most of her time to the working-women of London; she gave lectures on literature in the Working-Women's College, and taught the women in their homes. After her sudden death in 1907, Henry Newbolt published her poems; in 1910 extracts from her interesting letters and diaries were issued under the title of *Gathered Leaves.*

Miss Coleridge's principal publications were: *The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus,* 1893; *Fancy's Following,* 1896; *The King with Two Faces,* 1897; *Non Sequitur,* 1900; *The Fiery Dawn,* 1901; *The Shadow on the Wall,* 1904; *The Lady on the Drawing-room Floor,* 1906; *Life of Holman Hunt,* 1907; *Poems,* 1907; *Gathered Leaves,* 1910.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Besides her bold and somewhat capricious imagination, with its natural and simple expression, the qualities which Mary Coleridge brought to her poetry . . . were a great literary appetite, knowledge, and memory—a wide sympathy, tenderness of feeling, and profound spirituality—and a humor without which such seriousness and devotion of life as were hers can hardly be made palpable in literature. . . . She did not write poems because she had learned the grammar of verse, nor because she thought she had valuable moral lessons for well-intentioned people. Her poetry is the irrepressible song of a fancy whose vagaries she would have thought it impertinent to analyze . . . ."—Robert Bridges, *Cornhill Magazine* Nov. 1907, p. 595.

## LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS
## (1870- ), p. 859

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lord Alfred Douglas (1870- ), the second son of the eighth Marquis of Queensberry, was one of the young Oxford men who attended, in the rôle of admirers and imitators, the meteoric career of Oscar Wilde. Under Wilde's influence, Lord Alfred early experimented in verse of the æsthetic stamp, particularly in the sonnet form, and acquired considerable technical skill. When Oscar Wilde was brought to trial at the instigation of the Marquis of Queensberry, and was sentenced to hard labor at Reading Gaol, Lord Alfred was implicated in the scandal stirred up by the trial; he has since been largely occupied in bringing libel suits against his detractors, attacking them in satiric verse, and defending himself in autobiographical writings remarkable for their lack of reticence. He has been founder and editor of two magazines, *Plain Speech* and *Plain English,* dedicated to attacks on public men and the refutation of attacks on himself. Besides the sonnets on which his literary fame largely depends, and his satiric pieces, he has written nonsense poetry, unusual in its polish and sophistication.

Douglas's principal publications are: *Tails with a Twist,* 1893; *The City of the Soul,* 1899; *The Pongo Papers,* 1907; *Sonnets,* 1909; *Oscar Wilde and Myself,* 1914; *The Rhyme of F Double E,* 1914; *The Rossiad,* 1916; *Eve and the Serpent,* 1917; *The Devil's Carnival,* 1922; *In Excelsis,* 1924; *The Duke of Berwick, and Other Rhymes* (1925); *Autobiography,* 1929.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"His [Douglas's] output is small, but his wares are never shoddy. . . . His language is at times archaic, but it is never forced. He owes much to the old English ballad-writers. He is indebted in a great measure, without being their bondsman, to such poets as Baudelaire. . . . Whatever may be his personal eccentricities, he sublimates them in art. In spite of private quarrels and public scandals, in spite of political feuds and literary vendettas, malice cannot gainsay the vigor of his diction and the loftiness of his lyric vision."—G. S. Viereck, Introduction to Douglas's *Perkin Warbeck, and Other Poems,* pp. 5-14.

## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
## (1865- ), p. 861

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Butler Yeats (1865- ), the principal leader of the Irish Literary Revival, was born near Dublin of Anglo-Irish stock; his father was a portrait-painter with Pre-Raphaelite leanings and a fervent interest in the Irish Nationalist cause. A mystic from childhood, Yeats absorbed from the Sligo countryside, where he spent holidays with his grandparents, the fairy-lore of Ireland, and in his schooldays gleaned from Synnot's *Esoteric Buddhism* and other works of transcendental philosophy a sense of the divine mystery in all material things. In these theosophical studies, Yeats was joined by G. W. Russell, whom he met at the Dublin Art School, and by other young men who formed the core of the literary movement, which was both patriotic and mystical. Yeats's first poems had to do with "Arcadia and the India of Romance," but a study of Sir Samuel Ferguson's poetry prompted him to write in 1889 *The Wanderings of Oisen*, an epic retelling of Celtic hero-tales which his reading in the collections of Irish folk-lorists had made familiar. Meanwhile Yeats had begun in 1887 a residence in London, and had become intimate with Lionel Johnson and Arthur Symons in meetings of the Rhymers' Club, and learned from them to appreciate the symbolic poetry of William Blake and of the French symbolists such as Paul Verlaine; this new symbolism added to that which Yeats had already evolved from his study of Irish legends, burdened his next poetry with a mystical significance that made it almost unintelligible. "The old tales" he said, "were still alive for me, indeed, but with a new, strange, half-unreal life, as if in a wizard glass." This preoccupation with symbolism and the "Secret Rose" did not prevent Yeats, who has always been practical even when most romantic, from encouraging the growth of the Irish Revival; he helped to organize simultaneously in 1892 the Irish Literary Society in London and the Irish National Literary Society in Dublin, and worked hard to guide the new literature away from merely Nationalist propaganda to a purer art, continuing the tradition established by William Allingham and Sir Samuel Ferguson. "An Irish romantic movement," he said, "should make Ireland, as Ireland and all other lands were in ancient times, a holy land to its own people." This purpose, added to the sane influence of Lady Gregory, gradually brought him out of his elaborately symbolic period into one which was no less romantic but more perspicuous. In 1899 he turned, among other interests, to drama, and established with George Moore and other associates the Irish Literary Theatre, which became the Abbey Theatre in 1894; his plays, however, stood somewhat apart from the main current of the Irish drama, which was realistic rather than romantic and legendary as were his *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894) and *Shadowy Waters* (1900). Since the opening of the century, Yeats's poetry has changed only in an added intellectual quality; but as a practical leader he has guided later developments in Irish literature and politics with great energy. He has been a senator of the Irish Free State since 1922, and in the following year was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Yeats's principal publications are: *Mosada*, 1886; *The Wanderings of Oisen*, 1889; *John Sherman*, 1891; *The Countess Kathleen*, 1892; *The Celtic Twilight*, 1893; *The Poems of William Blake* (ed.), 1893; *The Land of Heart's Desire*, 1894; *Poems*, 1895; *The Secret Rose*, 1897; *The Wind among the Reeds*, 1899; *The Shadowy Waters*, 1900; *Cathleen ni Hoolihan*, 1902; *Ideas of Good and Evil*, 1903; *In the Seven Woods*, 1903; *Hour Glass and Other Plays*, 1904; *The King's Threshold*, 1904; *Deirdre*, 1907; *The Green Helmet and Other Poems*, 1910; *J. M. Synge and the Ireland of His Time*, 1911; *Plays for an Irish Theatre*, 1912; *Responsibilities*, 1914; *Reveries*, 1916; *Per Amica Silentia Lunae*, 1918; *The Cutting of an Agate*, 1919; *The Wild Swans at Coole*, 1919; *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, 1921; *Seven Poems and a Fragment*, 1922; *The Trembling of the Veil*, 1922; *Later Poems*, 1923; *A Vision*, 1926; *The Tower*, 1928; *Three Things*, 1929.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"The distinction of Mr. Yeats, as an Irish poet, is his ability to write Celtic poetry, with all the Celtic notes of style and imagination, in a classical manner. . . . When he takes a Celtic theme, some vast and epic legend, or some sad and lyrical fancy, he does not reflect the mere confused vastness of the one, the mere flying vagueness of the other; his art is full of reason. . . . It is not the subjects alone, nor the musical skill alone, nor the dominant mood alone, but all these together that make these poems so satisfying and so haunting. They have that natural felicity which belongs to beautiful things in nature, but a felicity under the control of art."—Lionel Johnson, *Academy*, Oct. 1, 1892, p. 278.

"It is by means of dramatic symbols . . . that Mr. Yeats weaves about the simplicity of moods that elaborate web of atmosphere in which the illusion of love, and the cruelty of pain, and the gross ecstasy of hope, became changed into beauty. . . . To a poet who is also a mystic there is a great simplicity in things, beauty being really one of the foundations of the world, woman a symbol of beauty, and the visible moment, in which to love or to write love songs is an identical act, really as long or as short as eternity. Never, in these love songs, concrete as they become through the precision of their imagery, does an earthly circumstance divorce ecstasy from the impersonality of vision. This poet cannot see love except as the absolute beauty, cannot distinguish between the mortal person and the eternal idea. Every rapture hurries him beyond the edge of the world and beyond the end of time. The conception of lyric poetry which Mr. Yeats has perfected . . . may be clearly defined. . . . A lyric is an embodied ecstasy, and an ecstasy so profoundly personal that it loses the accidental qualities of personality, and becomes a part of the universal consciousness. Itself, in its first, merely personal stage, a symbol, it can be expressed only by symbol; and Mr. Yeats has chosen his symbolism out of Irish mythology, which gives him the advantage of an elaborate poetic background, new to modern poetry."—Arthur Symons, *Studies in Prose and Verse*, pp. 232-34.

## DORA SIGERSON SHORTER
## (1866-1918), p. 871

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*The Sad Years*, with a tribute by Katharine Tynan (Doran, New York, 1918).

*Sixteen Dead Men, and Other Poems of Easter Week* (Kennerley, New York, 1919).

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Dora Sigerson Shorter (1866-1918) was born in Dublin, in the midst of the group out of which emerged the Irish Literary Revival. Her father, George Sigerson, was a poet and scholar much esteemed in Ireland, and a close friend of John Butler Yeats, also a poet and the father of William Butler Yeats, the leader of the new movement. A stormy Irish beauty, with a mass of shortly cropped hair, gray eyes, and vivid lips, Dora Sigerson found poetry her natural language and turned her dreams into meter from her childhood. A Dublin critic, John O'Leary, a friend of the family, found her early verse too introspective and advised, as an antidote, the ballad style; she read, accordingly, Percy's *Reliques*, and began writing ballads with Celtic themes. In 1896 she went to live in London as the wife of C. K. Shorter, a prominent essayist and editor, but she still felt Ireland to be her home; in her poetry, published in 1896 and 1897 under the titles *The Fairy Changeling* and *Ballads and Poems*, she relieved her homesickness by returning in fancy to Irish scenes. So generous-hearted and impulsive that she carried home every stray dog that she met on the streets, she was deeply stirred by the ill-success of the Irish nationalist movement, and even more by events which followed the outbreak of the World War. The bloody outcome of the Irish Rebellion in 1916 prostrated her; after assisting in preparing for the press her poems of protest, which she called *Sixteen Dead Men*, she sank into a dangerous illness and soon died.

Mrs. Shorter's principal publications were: *Verses*, 1894; *The Fairy Changeling, and Other Poems*, 1897; *My Lady's Slipper, and Other Poems*, 1898; *Ballads and Poems*, 1899; *The Father Confessor*, 1900; *The Woman Who Went to Hell*, 1902; *As the Sparks Fly Upward*, 1904; *The Country House Party*, 1905; *The Story and Song of Carl Roderick; Through Wintry Terrors*, 1907; *The Troubadour*, 1910; *New Poems*, 1912; *Madge Linsey, and Other Poems*, 1913; *Do-Well and Do-Little, a Fairy Story*, 1914; *Love of Ireland: Poems and Ballads*, 1916; *Sixteen Dead Men*, 1917.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mrs. Clement Shorter's technical accomplishment, her sense of metre and of style, do not, unfortunately, equal her inborn poetic feeling; yet her singing has an individual note which goes far to redeem its manifold imperfections of form. There is race in her work; it smacks of the soil; it is no mere imitative culture-product, but an expression in innate emotion and impulse. Mrs. Shorter has all the fanciful melancholy, the ardent spirituality, and the eerie-pathetic invention of the Celts. The unseen world of semi-malignant elemental beings is quite as real to her as the tangible world of her five senses. Her imagination is nourished upon folklore, and even Christian conceptions of life and death she instinctively translates into terms of that ancient and exquisite paganism which seems like a natural emanation from the green hills and rushing waters of Ireland."—William Archer, *Poets of the Younger Generation*, p. 396.

## ARTHUR SYMONS (1865- ), p. 873

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Arthur Symons (1865- ), poet, critic, and devotee of the arts, was born in Wales of Cornish parents whose conservative ethical and religious principles did not prevent their allowing him liberty to do as he liked. "I wanted to want to be good," he tells us; "but all I really wanted was to be clever." His first verses were religious; but at the age of thirteen he was writing metrical tales in imitation of Byron's *Don Juan*, which had first attracted him because of its local reputation for appalling wickedness. Hating his middle-class environment, and shrinking from adopting any profession that would offend his acutely developed sensibilities, he began going up to London for prolonged visits, fell in with such congenial spirits as Wilde and Dowson, attended meetings of the Rhymers' Club, contributed to *The Yellow Book*, the organ of the decadents, haunted the theaters and concert-halls, and was intoxicated with the thronging impressions of city life. His greatest joy, he says, was being alone in the midst of a crowd. An eager student of all that interested him, he acquired a knowledge of Elizabethan drama that qualified him to edit Shakespeare and other dramatists in his early twenties, and an acquaintance with the arts that enabled him to earn his livelihood by critical writing. He was one of the first Englishmen to appreciate the French poets Baudelaire and Verlaine and to introduce them to English readers; their example, along with the precepts of Walter Pater, was paramount in developing Symons's own poetic style. To enlarge his experience with life and his store of colorful impressions, he lived in Paris, Rome, Venice, and Seville as he had lived in London, studying the people and the arts. He married in 1901 a lady who, like himself, "possessed some hardly conscious instinct which turns towards beauty unerringly," and in 1905 rather surprisingly established a permanent home in the quiet environment of Wittersham, where he still lives (1930).

Symons's principal publications are: *An Introduction to the Study of Browning*, 1886; *Days and Nights*, 1889; *Silhouettes*, 1892; *London Nights*, 1895; *Amoris Victima*, 1897; *Studies in Two Literatures*, 1897; *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, 1899; *Images of Good and Evil*, 1900; *Plays, Acting, and Music*, 1903; *Cities*, 1903; *Studies in Prose and Verse*, 1904; *Spiritual Adventures*, 1905; *A Book of Twenty Songs*, 1905; *The Fool of the World, and Other Poems*, 1906; *Studies in Seven Arts*, 1906; *William Blake*, 1907; *Cities of Italy*, 1907; *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*, 1909; *Knave of Hearts*, 1913; *Figures of Several Centuries*, 1915; *Tragedies*, 1916; *Tristan and Iseult*, 1917; *Cities and Sea Coasts and Islands*, 1918; *Color Studies in Paris*, 1918; *The Toy Cart*, 1919; *Studies in Elizabethan Drama*, 1920; *Charles Baudelaire*, 1921; *Dramatis Personæ*, 1923; *Translations from Baudelaire*, 1925; *Studies in Strange Souls*, 1929.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"If there ever was a religion of the eyes, I have devoutly practised that religion. I noted every face that passed me on the pavement; I looked into the omnibuses, the cabs, always with the same eager hope of seeing some beautiful or interesting person, some gracious movement, a delicate expression, which would be gone if I did not catch it as it went. This search without an aim grew to be almost a torture to me; my eyes ached with the effort, but I could not control them. At every moment, I knew, some spectacle awaited them; I grasped at all these sights as a dog that I once saw standing in an Irish stream and snapping at the bubbles that ran continually past him on the water. Life ran past me continually, and I tried to make all its bubbles my own."—A. Symons, "A Prelude to Life," *Spiritual Adventures*, p. 32.

"His [Symons's] . . . poems deal very often with works of art, and with the highly artificial . . . beauty of the modern urban landscape. . . . He is very largely a poet of the artificial. . . . It is not that he objects to nature. He could from the very first appreciate certain aspects of her, and he came in time to have a very individual feeling for her. But nature, in his early poems, stirs him only where it is an intruder among artificial things. . . . His is the attitude, it has been often enough said, of a decadent poet. . . . His aim was, with the utmost economy, to suggest momentary impressions, transient moods; the impressions to be, of preference, those of one gazing at things themselves artificial or seen under an artificial light, the moods to be not only fleeting but frivolous or perverse. . . . Certain effects of color, which might have been brushed off a moth's wings and which the first breath will scatter; certain movements, of a dancer seen perhaps from the wings; certain notes of a just audible music; certain moods which flutter through the mind and are gone, have been seized delicately, firmly, and perpetuated without any of that incongruous mason's art which too often mars the propriety of 'a moment's monument.'"—T. E. Welby, *Arthur Symons, A Critical Study*, pp. 5-6, 21-22.

## RUDYARD KIPLING
## (1865-1936), p. 878

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was born in Bombay, where his father, a writer of verse as well as an artist, was professor of Architectural Sculpture in the British School of Art. From his native nurse Kipling learned to speak Hindustani as soon as English; until he was six India was practically the only world that he knew. In 1871, however, his parents took him to England, where, on their return to India, he was left with friends to be educated. In the course of time, he entered the United Service College at Bideford, to be fitted for a governmental position in India; his poor eyesight disqualifying him for such a position, and his tastes turning toward reading and writing, his friends were easily reconciled to his becoming an author. In this ambition he was encouraged by the praise he received for early poems published in London journals and privately printed by his father in Bombay, and also by the interest of his uncle, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, who, as a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, introduced him to William Morris and other writers. In 1882 he sailed for India and became sub-editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* at Lahore, where his family was then living; the gruff editor-in-chief, while exacting hard day labor, called him a "clever pup" and allowed him rather a free hand in his contributions; accordingly he submitted poems and stories, later collected as *Departmental Ditties* (1886) and *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1887), along with his regular assignments. This discipline in journalism, and this early practice in turning his shrewd observations of English and native life in India into prose and verse "that should take with the English public," was of the highest importance in determining the bent of Kipling's literary career. In 1887 he graduated to the editorial staff of a larger paper, the *Pioneer* at Allahabad; and, as traveling correspondent, began a series of journeys to all parts of India; he saw the fighting on the Afghanistan border, and in 1889 embarked on a trip around the world, described in *From Sea to Sea* (1899). Arriving, by way of America, in London, he was somewhat surprised to find himself unknown; a reissue, from English presses, of his works published in India gratified him by an immense success; the English public, it seemed, was hungry for just the graphic impressions of Indian life which he had to offer. A short pause, and he was off once more: to South Africa, where he enlarged his acquaintance with the far-flung empire and cultivated the friendship of Cecil Rhodes; to Australia, Ceylon, and back to India, where he wrote his *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). Marrying an American girl in 1892, he embarked with her on new wanderings which led them, by way of Japan, to Brattleboro, Vermont; there Kipling made his first prolonged residence in many years, wrote the *Jungle Books* (1894-95) and *Just So Stories* (1902) for his two children, and added a not wholly sympathetic acquaintance with American life to his enormous fund of literary material. After returning to England in 1896, Kipling made one more journey to South Africa and another to America; he then settled down to a comparatively uneventful life in the manor-house of Bateman's Burwash in Sussex, keeping bees and prize-cattle, fishing and tramping over the downs, and drawing from his store of memories the material for his poetry and fiction, the expression of his robust philosophy. The smooth current of his life was broken by the World War, in which he lost his only son; he joined with Newbolt in reporting the events of the war and in heartening his countrymen with his verses. He was often mentioned in connection with the laureateship, but never appointed; his highest reward for his work was the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907.

Kipling's principal publications were: *Departmental Ditties*, 1886; *Plain Tales from the Hills*, 1887; *Soldiers Three, In Black and White, The Story of the Gadsbys, Under the Deodars, The Phantom 'Rickshaw, Wee Willie Winkie*, 1888-89; *Life's Handicap*, 1890; *The Light That Failed*, 1891; *Barrack-Room Ballads*, 1892; *Many Inventions*, 1893; *The Jungle Book*, 1894; *Second Jungle Book*, 1895; *The Seven Seas*, 1896; *Captains Courageous*, 1897; *The Day's Work*, 1898; *Stalky & Co.*, 1899; *From Sea to Sea*, 1899; *Kim*, 1901; *Just So Stories*, 1902; *The Five Nations*, 1903; *Traffics and Discoveries*, 1904; *Puck of Pook's Hill*, 1906; *Actions and Reactions*, 1909; *Rewards and Fairies*, 1910; *Songs from Books*, 1913; *The Harbor Watch*, 1913; *The New Armies in Training*, 1914; *France At War*, 1915; *Fringes of the Fleet*, 1915; *Sea Warfare*, 1916; *A Diversity of Creatures*, 1917; *The Years Between*, 1918; *Inclusive Verse*, 1919; *Letters of Travel*, 1920; *Debits and Credits*, 1926; *A Book of Words*, 1928.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The greatest thing in the world for Kipling is Power at work—whether it is exhibited by a humble man, a huge engine, or an empire. That is why he has made such a strong impression upon strong men everywhere. The age is one of great schemes, industrial, commercial, and political; the achievements of science are marvelous—and yet until Kipling came the people who write were saying that it was an unromantic age; that poetry had been killed the world over by steam, and that romance was dead because republicanism had leveled all men to a common pattern. Kipling had the advantage of living in his impressionable youth where the new civilization was imposing itself upon one that was old and worn out. He saw part of the empire in making. He was looking at the raw edges of the work, and he grasped the full meaning of the new forces behind it. Never has the executive power of man so revealed itself as in the nineteenth century. Instead of looking upon it as prosaic, and turning back to other times and countries for a field of romance, Kipling saw that he and we are truly living in an age of romance. He set to work to reveal the age to itself."—Robert Bridges, *Outlook*, Feb. 4, 1899, pp. 281-82.

"In some of his finest pieces Mr. Kipling is a prey to the grandiose aspect of things. . . . We know that England is great, that Englishmen have done great things, that the fame of her glory has filled the corners of the earth; but we have no occasion to shriek about it, to wax hysterically wroth with those who deny it. Shakspere's great burst of loyal pride, Milton's solemn utterance, Wordsworth's noble verses, Browning's *Home Thoughts from Abroad*, Tennyson's stately lyrics, do not brag and bluster and protest. . . . The occasion on which the verses were written may justify some of this agitated declamation; but the tone is habitual with Mr. Kipling."—Lionel Johnson, *Academy*, May 28, 1892, p. 510.

"The passion for the sea, the mastery of its terrors, the confident but distrustful familiarity with it of the English seaman, have never had such expression as Mr. Kipling has given to them. . . . His imagination dwells with vivifying emotion on the heroic combats—now victories, now defeats—of his race with the winds and the waves from which they draw their strength. All that belongs to the story of man upon the sea—the line-of-battle ship, the merchantman, the tramp steamer, the derelict, the little cargo-boats, the lighthouse, the bell-buoy—has its part in his verse of human experience. And so vivid are his appreciations of the poetic significance of even the most modern and practical of the conditions and aspects of sea-life that . . . he has sung the song of the marine steam-engine and all its machinery, from furnace-bars to screw, in such wise as to convert their clanging beats and throbs into a sublime symphony in accord with the singing of the morning stars."—Charles Eliot Norton, *Atlantic Monthly*, Jan., 1897, p. 114.

## SIR WILLIAM WATSON
## (1858-1935), p. 897

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sir William Watson (1858-1935) came of an old Yorkshire family, from which he inherited a staunchness and poise, a reverence for things long established, and a courage in voicing his convictions that were always the essentials of his character. From his mother he learned to love religion and poetry. His first volume of verse, *The Prince's Quest* (1880), followed the current mode in its imitation of Tennyson; but in his second volume, *Wordsworth's Grave* (1890), he based his style on Arnold and the classics; to this conservative tradition he afterwards remained true. His self-reliant independence of contemporary modes and passions he also showed in his political opinions. He fearlessly disagreed with English policy as regards Turkey in 1896, South Africa in 1900, and Ireland in 1920; his utterances in the vigorous sonnets entitled *The Purple East* (1896) and later volumes probably kept him from appointment as laureate in 1913. With England's part in the World War he was sincerely in sympathy, and in 1917 he received his knighthood. Temperate, self-contained, scholarly, he seldom traveled; his principal world was his study at The Cliff, Peacehaven, Sussex.

Watson's principal publications were: *The Prince's Quest*, 1880; *Epigrams of Art, Life, and Nature*, 1884; *Wordsworth's Grave*, 1890; *Lachrymæ Musarum*, 1892; *Lyric Love*, 1892; *The Eloping Angels*, 1893; *Excursions in Criticism*, 1893; *Odes, and Other Poems*, 1894; *The Father of the Forest*, 1895; *The Purple East*, 1896; *The Year of Shame*, 1896; *The Hope of the World*, 1897; *Ode on the Coronation*, 1902; *For England*, 1903; *New Poems*, 1909; *Sable and Purple*, 1910; *The Heralds of the Dawn*, 1912; *The Muse in Exile*, 1913; *Pencraft: a Plea for Olden Ways*, 1916; *Retrogression, and Other Poems*, 1916; *The Man Who Saw, and Other Poems*, 1917; *The Superhuman Antagonists*, 1919; *Ireland Unfreed*, 1920; *Poems Brief and New*, 1925; *Selected Poems*, 1928.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The great quality [of Mr. Watson's poems] is their style, as strong as it is flexible, as sure as it is refined, finished in every detail, and yet large and simple in its masses, clear-flowing always. Higher praise can hardly be given to style merely; in its vocabulary and cadences it continues with original touch the traditions of Landor and Arnold, and, in less degree, of Wordsworth's diction in blank verse; it is most admirable in its mastery of pure and often lofty phrase, and relies much upon the phrase as the element of composition; it is excessive in its Latinity, in its polysyllabic preponderance to a degree that seems mannered, and in the glide of the words that results; but . . . it is the style of Mr. Watson in all his verse which lifts it out of comparison with his contemporaries. The appeal to the literary sense made by the style is very much increased by the prevailing tone and treatment. Mr. Watson is primarily a poet of meditation; thought of some kind, critical or political, or more broadly human, is the substance of his verse, sometimes given in the flashing phrase of a single idea, sometimes in the diffused irony of a fable, . . . and at others in a mood, though rarely. But in rendering this thought less reliance is placed on imagination and passion than has been used in the century. The verse cannot be described as romantic; . . . the ideal here found is rather classic purity and elegance than color, passion, that outward audacity or inner intensity which go with romantic temperament. . . . Sentiment, pathos, meditative power, melody and phrase, love of the poets, interest in man's spiritual problems, passion for his social happiness, together with the faculty for graceful compliment, for friendship in verse, for light irony and the cameo forms of the art as well as for denunciation and eloquent protest in its noblest forms—all this the volume [*Collected Poems*] evinces. . . . More than all these qualities, which have been indicated so briefly, one other thing stands out shining: the devotion of the poet to the ideal of poetry as he received it from Tennyson, last of the sacred line."—G. E. Woodberry, *Century Magazine*, Sept., 1902, pp. 802-03.

## ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN (1859-1936), p. 906

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Alfred Edward Housman (1859-1936) was born in Worcestershire, although nearby Shropshire is the principal setting for his poems. He was one of three children, all of whom adopted literary or artistic careers. Educated at an exclusive private school in Worcestershire and at Oxford, he excelled in classical studies; at the age of twenty-two, after taking his master's degree, he went to London as a clerk in the Patent Office and there submitted to a monotonous routine for ten years. During that period he spent many long evenings reading Latin and Greek in the British Museum, and preparing studies in the minor Latin poets, which were later published. As a result of this work he was appointed in 1892 to a professorship in Latin in University College, London, and in 1911 to the Chair of Latin at the University of Cambridge. Between 1886 and 1905 Housman lived in Highgate, London, and there wrote *A Shropshire Lad*. Most of the poems were composed in 1895, during a great burst of creative activity. The publisher to whom he submitted the manuscript accepted it instantly and asked when a second volume could be expected. Twenty-eight years later Housman completed the second volume—a volume he called, with characteristic finality, *Last Poems*. This was published in 1922. "It is not likely," he said in his foreword, "that I shall ever be impelled to write much more." In the autumn of 1936, the year of his death, Housman's final work, *More Poems*, was issued by his brother Laurence. Apparently little interested in the popularity and influence of his volumes, Housman lived for the most part in seclusion and was singularly averse to talking about himself or his poetry. Despite the meagerness of his output, Housman has attained high rank among English poets.

Housman's principal publications were: *A Shropshire Lad*, 1896; *Manilius, Book I*, 1912; *Juvenal*, 1905; *Manilius, Book II*, 1912; *Book III*, 1916; *Book IV*, 1920; *Last Poems*, 1922; *Lucan*, 1926.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mr. Housman has three main topics: a stoical pessimism; a dogged rather than an exultant patriotism; and what I may call a wistful cynicism. . . . Mr. Housman's melancholy is inveterate and not to be shaken off, but there is nothing whining about it; rather, it is bracing, invigorating. . . . His patriotism is local rather than national or imperial. . . . He dwells, not harshly but with compassion, upon the mutability of human feeling, the ease with which the dead are forgot, the anguish of love unrequited, and the danger that long life may mean slow degradation. . . . One of Mr. Housman's strongest and rarest qualities is his unerring dramatic instinct. . . . It is long since we have caught just this note in English verse—the note of intense feeling uttering itself in language of unadorned precision, uncontorted truth. Mr. Housman is a vernacular poet, if ever there was one. He employs scarcely a word that is not understanded of the people and current on their lips. For this very reason, some readers who have come to regard decoration, and even contortion, as of the essence of poetry, may need time to acquire the taste for Mr. Housman's simplicity. But if he is vernacular, he is also classical in the best sense of the word. His simplicity is not that of weakness, but of strength and skill. He eschews extrinsic and factitious ornament because he knows how to attain beauty without it. It is good to mirror a thing in figures, but it is at least as good to express the thing itself in its essence. . . . Mr. Housman has this talent in a very high degree; and cognate and complementary to it is his remarkable gift of reticence. . . . He will often say more by a cunning silence than many another poet by pages of speech. That is how he has contrived to get into this tiny volume so much of the very essence and savor of life."—William Archer, *Fortnightly Review*, Aug., 1898, pp. 265-71.

## GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL ("A. E.") (1867-1935), p. 922

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Collected Poems* (Macmillan, London, 1926).
*The Dark Weeping* (Faber, London, 1929).
*Midsummer Eve* (Gaige, New York, 1928).

*Voices of the Stones* (Macmillan, New York, 1925).
*The Candle of Vision* (Macmillan, London, 1918).
*Imaginations and Reveries* (Maunsel, Dublin, 1915).
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Welby, T. E.: "Æ," *Back Numbers* (Constable, London, 1929).
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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

George William Russell (1867-1935), whose original Theosophist pen-name of "Æon" was abbreviated by a hasty printer into "A. E.," the name by which he has since been known, was born of peasant stock at Lurgan, county Armagh, in Ulster. After acquiring experience with the recalcitrant Irish soil that has been of use to him in his later career, and after a brief education in local schools, he journeyed to Dublin with the intention of becoming an artist and thus giving substance to his vivid imaginative life, nursed on Celtic legends. At the art school he met W. B. Yeats, and through him was introduced to the group of ardent young Irishmen who were dreaming of a national literature separate from that of England. This group formed a club, later called the Hermetic Society, for the reading of Oriental and Transcendental philosophy and Theosophist literature, the mysticism of which, joined with the other-worldly quality of the native Celtic tradition, had much to do with the nature of the Irish Literary Revival. To the Theosophist journals edited by the group Russell contributed his first poems, collected in 1894 under the title *Homeward: Songs by the Way.* Meanwhile he developed a style in painting as mystical as that of his poems. His belief in the divinity of man resulted in a passion for democracy and social uplift; his love of the old Celtic legends, with their reflection of an heroic age, led him to conceive that the salvation of Ireland lay in a return, with scientific modifications, to the social conditions of the older time. These beliefs he preached to crowds on the hillsides above Dublin, towering before his audience, with his wild hair and giant frame, like a demigod returned from the Celtic past. His essays, his poems, his paintings in divers ways all tended to the same purpose; visionary to a remarkable degree, he yet was able to lead his dreams into constructive channels; from expeditions into the country to see fairies, he returned to lecture on coöperation before agricultural societies. As editor of the *Irish Homestead* he wielded a great influence on Irish economic reform; and as a political leader, he had an important part in the movement which resulted in the formation of the Irish Free State. Refusing office under the new government, he preferred to wield his influence upon Irish life through the editorial pages of *The Irish Statesman* and through his personal contacts. To Sunday evening gatherings at his home, dominated by his towering figure and personality, came the social and literary masters of Ireland; he wrote social and economic works, and for recreation painted his mystic pictures in the wild mountains of Donegal.

Russell's principal publications were: *Homeward: Songs by the Way*, 1894; *The Earth Breath*, 1897; *Literary Ideals in Ireland* (with others), 1899; *Ideals in Ireland* (with others), 1901; *The Nuts of Knowledge*, 1903; *The Divine Vision*, 1904; *The Mark of Apollo*, 1904; *New Poems*, 1904; *By Still Waters*, 1906; *Irish Essays*, 1906; *Deirdre*, 1907; *The Hero in Man*, 1909; *The Renewal of Youth*, 1911; *Co-operation and Nationality*, 1912; *Gods of War*, 1915; *Imaginations and Reveries*, 1915; *The National Being,* 1917; *The Candle of Vision,* 1919; *The Interpreters,* 1922; *The Dark Weeping,* 1929.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"The mysticism of A. E. is entirely different from the symbolism which has given Yeats the reputation of being a mystic. That which is purely decorative in the poetry of the latter is, in A. E., the expression of fundamental truths. . . . The externals which attracted the instinct for beauty in Yeats were not lost upon A. E., but he was above all concerned for the inner meaning of the phenomena, whose plastic beauty alone captured the imagination of [Yeats] . . . 'I know I am a spirit, and that I went forth in old time from the Self-ancestral to labors yet unaccomplished; but, filled ever and again with homesickness, I made these homeward songs by the way.' These words, with which A. E. introduced his first book of verse, should serve as a superscription to the *Collected Poems,* so completely do they summarize the whole message and tendency of his poetry. All his life he has sung of this conviction of man's identity with the Divine Power, the Ancestral Self of Eastern philosophy, from whom we are but temporarily divided. The occasion of his poems are those moments of rapture when the seer glimpses some vision reminding him of his immortal destiny, his absorption into Universal Being. The hours of twilight and dawn are those which most usually find the poet rapt in 'divine vision,' and to this circumstance must be attributed numerous landscapes whose beauty is undiminished by their being so frequently seen in the same light. . . . The violet and amethyst, the pearl and silver shades of night are a happy reflection not only of actual nature but also of the celestial cities and starry regions of the soul. . . . A. E.'s verse is not so much the utterance of a poet as the song of a prophet, and its importance is to be measured in other than purely literary terms. He often falls below the standard of technical perfection which was set by Yeats, and is the latter's most valuable gift to Irish poetry. But depth and sincerity, coupled with a general high level of workmanship, enable A. E. to take his place in the first rank. . . . We know that he has aspired to give us a revelation of Divine Beauty, and we are grateful that this should be his unique preoccupation."—Ernest Boyd, *Ireland's Literary Renaissance,* pp. 222-31.

## SIR HENRY JOHN NEWBOLT
## (1862- ), p. 924

### STANDARD EDITIONS

*Collected Poems, 1897-1907* (Nelson, London, 1927).
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*Prose and Poetry* (Dent, London, 1920).

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Welby, T. E.: "Sir Henry Newbolt," *Back Numbers* (Constable, London, 1929).

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Sir Henry Newbolt (1862- ), an eminent authority on poetry and the British navy, was reared in the cultured and conservative home of an English clergyman, on the edge of the "Black Country," the manufacturing district of England. His elementary education he received at Clifton, a school near Bristol, where he played cricket and gained the affection for public-school life and traditions which underlies much of his verse. After gaining his degree at Oxford, he practiced law as a barrister in Lincoln's Inn from 1887 to 1899, edited the *Monthly Review* from 1900 to 1904, taught poetry at Oxford from 1911 to 1921, wrote his poems, and collected his favorite verse in anthologies. Already, with Henley and Kipling, an ardent supporter of British military and naval policy, he took an active interest in the World War, wrote stirring ballads, acted as controller of wireless and cables, and was knighted for his services in 1915. After the war he was appointed official naval historian and compiled his monumental *Naval History of the War* in 1920.

Newbolt's principal publications are: *Taken from the Enemy,* 1892; *Modred, a Tragedy,* 1895; *Admirals All,* 1897; *The Island Race,* 1898; *Stories from Froissart,* 1899; *The Sailing of the Long Ships,* 1902; *Songs of the Sea,* 1904; *The Year of Trafalgar,* 1905; *The Old Country,* 1906; *The New June,* 1909; *Songs of Memory and Hope,* 1909; *Songs of the Fleet,* 1910; *The Twymans,* 1911; *Poems New and Old,* 1912; *The Book of the Blue Sea,* 1914; *The Book of the Thin Red Line,* 1915; *Tales of the Great War,* 1916; *The Book of the Happy Warrior,* 1917; *A New Study of English Poetry,* 1917; *St. George's Day,* 1918; *Submarine and Anti-Submarine,* 1918; *The Book of the Long Trail,* 1919; *The Book of Good Hunting,* 1920; *A Naval History of the War,* 1920; *The Book of the Grenvilles,* 1921; *Studies Green and Gray,* 1926; *New Paths on Helicon,* 1927; *The Linnet's Nest,* 1927.

### INTRODUCTORY CRITICISM

"Mr. Newbolt . . . is eminently a hero-worshiper, and eminently a believer in the mission of England. A dangerous faith, some may say, and one which may be easily used as a cloak for a mere lust of empire. Mr. Newbolt, however, is alive to these dangers. . . . There is nothing frothy, nothing blusterous or insincere, about Mr. Newbolt's patriotism. It is sad and earnest rather than thoughtlessly exultant. In his fervent loyalty to a great tradition, Mr. Newbolt is almost morbidly mindful of the responsibilities it imposes. . . . The same note recurs frequently in Mr. Newbolt's verse. He is never tired of heartening the Island Race to 'Play up!' but he does not fail to add, 'And play the game!' He is a Clifton boy, as we learn from more than one poem, and the best spirit of the English public-school breathes throughout his work. . . . Mr. Newbolt's lyre may not be of the widest range, but his touch on it is peculiarly his own—clean, and crisp, and ringing."—William Archer, *Poets of the Younger Generation*, pp. 290-304.

## THOMAS HARDY (1840-1928), p. 927

### STANDARD EDITIONS

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was born in Dorsetshire, a southern county of England that became the principal background of his fiction and poetry. His father was a building-constructor; his mother was intellectually ambitious, and so developed his mind that he became, even in childhood, an analytical although sympathetic observer of life around him. From Dorchester schools he learned little; but when in 1856 he was apprenticed to John Hicks, a local architect, he began the study of Latin and Greek with a fellow-apprentice, and wrote poems (later destroyed) under the influence of William Barnes, the bard of Dorsetshire, his friend and adviser. His architectural training under Hicks he supplemented in 1862 by study and work in London under Sir Arthur Blomfield; although he perfected himself in architecture to a degree that won him a prize offered by the Royal Institute in 1863, and that gave him a feeling for structure which strongly influenced his literary craftsmanship, he was more interested in the evening classes that he attended at the University of London, in music, plays, and painting, in theological and philosophic discussions with his few friends, and in his poetry. Poetry he wrote in abundance, and all of it, including much that he published in 1898 under the title of *Wessex Poems*, came promptly back from the publishers to whom he submitted it. In 1870, as a consequence of his engagement to Emma Gifford, whom he had met while repairing a church in Cornwall, he felt the need of money and, despairing of selling his poems, began the composition of novels. Working under the helpful advice of George Meredith, he wrote *Desperate Remedies* (1870), *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), and *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), each novel the work of a year and each showing a rapid advance in technique. By one of life's ironies, it was through these novels, in which Hardy had an interest slight in comparison with his devotion to his poetry, that he achieved fame. For almost thirty years he wrote his verse in private, and for the public wrote a long series of novels which reached a climax of favor with the publication of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in 1891. During this time his philosophic conception of chance as a malignant force ruling the universe, already developed in 1865 when he wrote the first of his *Wessex Poems*, had deepened under the influence of Schopenhauer and other German thinkers; his later novels, notably *Jude the Obscure* (1895), somewhat estranged the general public by their insistent embodiment of this theme. In 1898, settled for some time in a house of his own designing near Dorchester, and financially independent, Hardy was at last enabled to give over his writing of novels and to devote himself to his favorite means of literary expression. In that year he published *Wessex Poems, and Other Verses;* in 1902, *Poems of the Past and the Present;* and other collections followed. The work which he regarded as his masterpiece, the culmination to which all his work and thought had been leading, was his vast Napoleonic epic-drama, *The Dynasts*, published in three parts from 1903 to 1908. The remainder of Hardy's life was not anticlimactic. In his later poems and also in the quiet influence that radiated from his Dorset homestead, he continued to impress his personality upon the art and life of the modern world.

Hardy's principal publications were: *Desperate Remedies*, 1871; *Under the Greenwood Tree*, 1872; *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, 1872-73; *Far from the Madding Crowd*, 1874; *The Hand of Ethelberta*, 1876; *The Return of the Native*, 1878; *The Trumpet-Major* 1879; *A Laodicean*, 1880-81; *Two on a Tower*, 1882; *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 1884-85; *The Woodlanders*, 1886-87; *Wessex Tales*, 1888; *A Group of Noble Dames*, 1891; *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 1891; *Life's Little Ironies*, 1894; *Jude the Obscure*, 1895; *The Well-Beloved*, 1897; *Wessex Poems, and Other Verses*, 1898; *Poems of the Past and the Present*, 1902; *The Dynasts*, 1903-08; *Poems of William Barnes* (ed.), 1908; *Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses*, 1909; *Satires of Circumstance*, 1911-14; *A Changed Man and Other Stories*, 1913; *Moments of Vision*, 1917; *Late Lyrics*, 1922; *The Queen of Cornwall*, 1923; *Human Shows*, 1925; *Yuletide in a Younger World*, 1927; *Winter Words*, 1928.

## INTRODUCTORY CRITICISMS

"When we resume the effect which the poetry of Mr. Hardy makes upon the careful reader, we note . . . a sense of unity throughout. Mr. Hardy has expressed himself in a thousand ways, but has never altered his vision. From 1867 to 1917, through half a century of imaginative creation, he has not modified the large outlines of his art in the smallest degree. To early readers of his poems, before the full meaning of them became evident, his voice sounded inharmonious, because it did not fit in with the exquisite melodies of the later Victorian Age. But Mr. Hardy, with characteristic pertinacity, did not attempt to alter his utterance in the least, and now we can all perceive, if we take the trouble to do so, that what seemed harsh in his poetry was his peculiar and personal mode of interpreting his thoughts to the world. As in his novels so in his poems, Mr. Hardy has chosen to remain local, to be the interpreter for present and future times of one rich and neglected province of the British realm. From his standpoint there he contemplates the wide aspect of life, but it seems huge and misty to him, and he broods over the tiny accidents of Wessex idiosyncracy. His irony is audacious and even sardonic, and few poets have been less solicitous to please their weaker brethren. But no poet of modern times has been more careful to avoid the abstract and to touch upon the real." —Edmund Gosse, *Some Diversions of a Man of Letters*, pp. 257-58.

"Earth is to Hardy a haunted spot. . . . I know no poetry so pervaded as his with a sense of the continued presence of the dead, nor is there another body of verse in the world, I think, in which that sense is conveyed to us with such intolerable poignancy and beauty. It is a strange paradox. No living poet is, in his sharp breach with tradition, so intensely of his time as Thomas Hardy; and no poet writing today would have been so utterly at home on earth a thousand years ago."—John Livingstone Lowes, *Yale Review*, Apr. 1926, p. 522.

"People call me a pessimist; and if it is pessimism to think, with Sophocles, that 'not to have been born is best,' then I do not reject the designation. I never could understand why the word 'pessimism' should be such a red rag to many worthy people; and I believe, indeed, that a good deal of the robustious, swaggering optimism of recent literature is at bottom cowardly and insincere. I do not see that we are likely to improve the world by asseverating, however loudly, that black is white. . . . But my pessimism, if pessimism it be, does not involve the assumption that the world is going to the dogs. . . . On the contrary, my practical philosophy is distinctly meliorist. What are my books but one plea against 'man's inhumanity to man'—to woman—and to the lower animals? . . . Whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life, it is certain that men make it much worse than it need be. When we have got rid of a thousand remediable ills, it will be time enough to determine whether the ill that is irremediable outweighs the good."—Hardy's answer to his critics, recorded by William Archer, *Pall Mall Magazine*, Apr., 1901, p. 533.

# TABLE OF PRINCIPAL DATES

| | |
|---|---|
| 1795 | Birth of Carlyle |
| 1800 | Birth of Macaulay |
| 1803 | Birth of Emerson |
| 1805 | Battle of Trafalgar; death of Nelson |
| 1806 | Birth of Mrs. Browning |
| 1807 | Abolition of the slave trade |
| 1808-14 | Peninsular War |
| 1809 | Birth of Tennyson |
| 1809 | Birth of Poe |
| 1811 | Birth of Thackeray |
| 1812 | Birth of Browning |
| 1812 | Birth of Dickens |
| 1814 | Wordsworth's *The Excursion* |
| 1815 | Battle of Waterloo; Congress of Vienna |
| 1819 | Birth of Ruskin |
| 1819 | Birth of Walt Whitman |
| 1819-23 | Byron's *Don Juan* |
| 1820 | Birth of Eliot |
| 1820-30 | Reign of George IV |
| 1821 | Death of Keats |
| 1821-29 | Greek War of Independence |
| 1822 | Birth of Arnold |
| 1822 | Death of Shelley |
| 1824 | Death of Byron in Greece |
| 1828 | Birth of Rossetti |
| 1828 | Birth of Ibsen |
| 1828 | Birth of Meredith |
| 1829 | Catholic Emancipation Act |
| 1829 | Treaty of Adrianople |
| 1830 | Tennyson's *Poems Chiefly Lyrical* |
| 1830 | First Railway—between Liverpool and Manchester |
| 1830-37 | Reign of William IV |
| 1832 | Passage of the Reform Bill |
| 1832 | Death of Scott |
| 1832 | Death of Goethe |
| 1833 | Tennyson's *Poems* |
| 1833 | Abolition of slavery in British Colonies |
| 1833 | Passage of the "Factory Act of 1833" |
| 1833ff. | The Oxford Movement |
| 1833-34 | Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* |
| 1834 | Death of Coleridge |
| 1834 | Birth of Morris |
| 1834 | Birth of Thomson |
| 1834 | Revision of the Poor Law |
| 1835 | Invention of the telegraph |
| 1835 | Browning's *Paracelsus* |
| 1836 | Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* |
| 1837 | Accession of Queen Victoria |
| 1837 | Carlyle's *French Revolution* |
| 1837 | Birth of Swinburne |
| 1837 | Birth of Hardy |
| 1837-38 | Dickens's *Oliver Twist* |
| 1840-42 | Opium war |
| 1841 | Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship* |
| 1841 | Browning's *Pippa Passes* |
| 1841-46 | Browning's *Bells and Pomegranates* |
| 1842 | Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* |
| 1842 | Tennyson's *Poems* |
| 1842 | Treaty of Nanking and opening of treaty-ports in China |
| 1843 | Establishment of the Free Church of Scotland |
| 1843-60 | Ruskin's *Modern Painters* |
| 1844 | Passage of the "Factory Act of 1844" |
| 1845 | Browning's *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* |
| 1846 | Repeal of the Corn Laws |
| 1847 | Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese* |
| 1847 | Tennyson's *The Princess* |
| 1847-48 | Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* |
| 1848 | Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood |
| 1848 | Arnold's *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* |
| 1848 | Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* |
| 1848 | Suppression of Chartism |
| 1848 | Revolution in France; abdication of Louis Philippe |
| 1848 | Failure of liberal revolution in Germany and Austria |
| 1848 ff. | Macaulay's *History of England* |
| 1849 | Birth of Henley |
| 1849-50 | Dickens's *David Copperfield* |
| 1850 | Birth of Stevenson |
| 1850 | Death of Wordsworth |
| 1850 | Tennyson's *In Memoriam.* Tennyson appointed Poet Laureate |
| 1850 | Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* |
| 1850 | Rossetti's *The Germ* |
| 1851 | Mrs. Browning's *Casa Guidi Windows* |
| 1852 | Louis Napoleon proclaimed emperor of the French |
| 1853 | Arnold's *Poems* |
| 1853-55 | Thackeray's *The Newcomes* |
| 1853-56 | The Crimean War |
| 1854 | Opening of Japan |
| 1855 | Tennyson's *Maud and Other Poems* |
| 1855 | Browning's *Men and Women* |
| 1856 | Death of Heine |
| 1856 | Peace of Paris |
| 1857-58 | Indian Mutiny |
| 1858 | Treaties of Tientsin and further opening of China |
| 1858 | Morris's *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* |
| 1859 | Death of Macaulay |
| 1859 | Birth of Thompson |
| 1859 | Eliot's *Adam Bede* |
| 1859 | FitzGerald's *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* |
| 1859 | Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* |
| 1859 ff. | Tennyson's *The Idylls of the King* |
| 1859 | Darwin's *Origin of the Species* |
| 1860 | Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* |
| 1861 | Eliot's *Silas Marner* |
| 1861 | Accession of William I of Prussia |
| 1861-65 | Civil War in the United States |
| 1863 | Death of Thackeray |
| 1863 | Eliot's *Romola* |
| 1864 | Browning's *Dramatis Personæ* |
| 1864 | Death of Landor |
| 1864 | Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua* |

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|---|---|
| 1865 | Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* |
| 1865 | Birth of Kipling |
| 1865 | Birth of Yeats |
| 1866 | Arnold's *Essays in Criticism* |
| 1866 | Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* |
| 1866 | Newman's *Dream of Gerontius* |
| 1866 | Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* |
| 1867 | Morris's *The Life and Death of Jason* |
| 1867 | Second Parliamentary Reform Bill |
| 1868-69 | Browning's *The Ring and the Book* |
| 1868-70 | Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* |
| 1869 | Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* |
| 1869 | Blackmore's *Lorna Doone* |
| 1869 | Opening of Suez Canal |
| 1869 | Disestablishment of Anglican Church in Ireland |
| 1870 | Death of Dickens |
| 1870 | Rossetti's *Poems* |
| 1870 | Education Act—public elementary education in England |
| 1870 | Completion of Italian Unity |
| 1870-71 | Franco-Prussian War; third French Republic proclaimed |
| 1871 | German Empire established |
| 1871 | Swinburne's *Songs before Sunrise* |
| 1871 | Darwin's *Descent of Man* |
| 1871 ff. | Hardy's novels |
| 1872 | Ballot Act, providing for secret Australian Ballot |
| 1872 | Death of Mazzini |
| 1873 | Arnold's *Literature and Dogma* |
| 1874 | Birth of Chesterton |
| 1874 | Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* |
| 1875 ff. | Gilbert's Comic Operas |
| 1875 | Invention of the telephone |
| 1875 | Birth of Masefield |
| 1877 | Morris's *Sigurd the Volsung* |
| 1877 | Victoria made Empress of India |
| 1877 ff. | Ibsen's *Pillars of Society and other plays* |
| 1877-78 | Russo-Turkish War |
| 1878 | Congress of Berlin |
| 1878 | Passage of Factory and Workshop Act |
| 1879 | Meredith's *The Egoist* |
| 1880 | Rossetti's *Ballads and Sonnets* |
| 1880 | Birth of Noyes |
| 1881 | Death of Carlyle |
| 1882 | Death of Rossetti |
| 1882 | Death of Emerson |
| 1882 | British intervention in Egypt |
| 1882 | Arnold's *Tristram of Lyonesse* |
| 1882 | Triple Alliance consummated |
| 1883 | Fabian Society established |
| 1883 | Stevenson's *Treasure Island* |
| 1884-85 | Third Parliamentary Reform Bill |
| 1885 | Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses* |
| 1885 | Fall of Khartum and death of "Chinese" Gordon |
| 1886 | Kipling's *Departmental Ditties* |
| 1886 | First Irish Home Rule Bill |
| 1887 | Queen Victoria's Jubilee |
| 1888 | Accession of Kaiser William II |
| 1888 | Henley's *Book of Verses* |
| 1889 | Death of Browning |
| 1890 | Dismissal of Bismarck |
| 1892 | Death of Tennyson |
| 1892 | Shaw's first play |
| 1893 | Second Irish Home Rule Bill |
| 1894 | Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire* |
| 1895 | Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* |
| 1895 | Conrad's first novel |
| 1896 | Death of Morris |
| 1896 | Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* |
| 1897 | First Workmen's Compensation Act in England |
| 1898 | Russia secures Port Arthur |
| 1898 | Spanish-American War |
| 1899-1902 | Boer War |
| 1900 | Death of Ruskin |
| 1900 | Chesterton's first published work |
| 1900 | Boxer insurrection in China |
| 1901 | Death of Queen Victoria |
| 1901-10 | Reign of King Edward VII |
| 1902 | Anglo-Japanese Alliance |
| 1904 | Galsworthy's first published novel |
| 1904 | Anglo-French *entente cordiale* |
| 1904-05 | Russo-Japanese War |
| 1907 | Anglo-Russian *entente* |
| 1908 | Young Turk Revolution |
| 1908 | Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven* |
| 1909 | Establishment of South African Union |
| 1909 | Death of Swinburne |
| 1910 | Accession of King George V. |
| 1912 | Third Home Rule Bill adopted for Ireland |
| 1914-18 | World War |

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